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THE LIFE AND FRIENDSHIPS OF
CATHERINE MARSH

"The pioneer of women's Evangelistic forces in the England of to-day."—ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

"She seemed expressly sent below
To teach our erring minds to see
The rhythmic change of Time's swift flow,
As part of still Eternity."
COVENTRY PATMORE.

"The saint it is who enlarges the boundaries of human experience, and throws into the range of human life another plane. . . . To him the unseen and eternal and holy world is the real abode, and every place on which he treads has links with the spiritual world."—*From All Saints, in The Times of October 27th, 1917, by permission.*





Catherine Marsh.
1842.

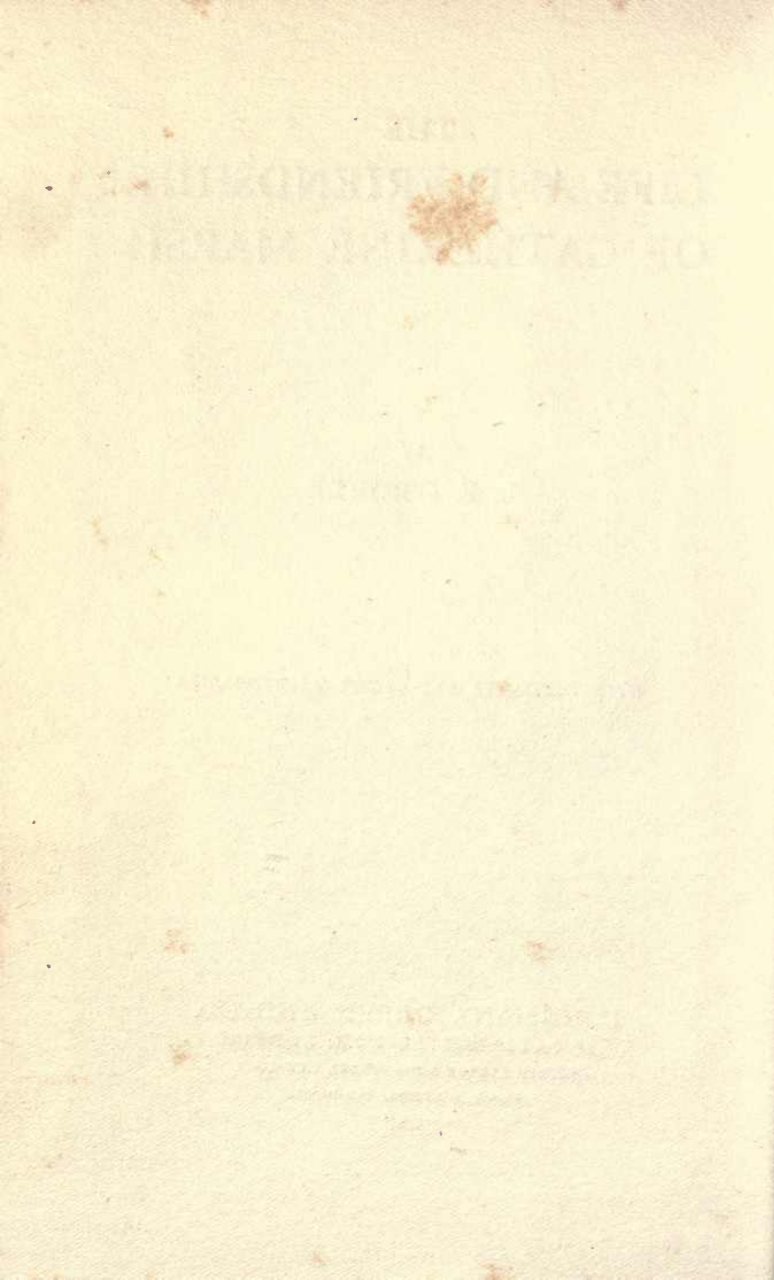
THE
LIFE AND FRIENDSHIPS
OF CATHERINE MARSH

BY
L. E. O'RORKE

WITH PORTRAITS AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

LONG years ago, when they both were young, Caroline Fuller Maitland was staying with Catherine Marsh at Leamington, and as she watched with amused interest the number and variety of young men and women who surrounded her friend, and saw their unmistakable affection, admiration, and desire for her friendship, and noticed the un-selfconscious and pleasant response she gave to them, "O Katie," she said one day, "if you should die before me, I would write a book and call it *Katie and Her Friends*, and every one would enjoy it."

Had Miss Maitland been the survivor, those who read her letters to Catherine Marsh will see what a delightful book it would have been.

By a pleasant coincidence it is her nephew, Mr. J. A. Fuller Maitland, who has given invaluable help in the writing of this book by allowing, as his aunt's executor, the publication of her letters, and by reading the manuscript, and giving helpful counsel, especially in the difficulty of selecting from the many incidents, interests, and friendships in Catherine Marsh's long and very full life those which it became necessary to omit, to enable it to be condensed into one volume. Much had unwillingly to be left out, including the mention of very many of her friends; and the whole book has had to be written briefly.

All her contemporaries are gone, but happily there are letters to her from many of them, and these will help those who never knew her to understand something of her character as they see what her correspondents felt about her. They will read it in the letters of her relations and friends, of those who were comparative strangers to

her, and of those who knew her only by her books, in which, while she wrote of others, she unconsciously revealed herself.

To a friend who wrote thus to her : " I have read your father's *Life* three times, and have given it away in numbers, and I have wondered how you can give to the public such precious treasures, I should hide them in my heart," she replied : " How utterly I am one with you in the longing to keep those sacred treasures in my heart alone, and hidden from every one. But I dare not. Do you remember the history of the lepers in 2 Kings vii., who, leaving the famishing city of Samaria, found in the deserted camp of the Syrians food and raiment, gold and silver, in abundance, and satisfied their hunger. Then they accumulated treasures for themselves, *and hid them*. Then they said one to another, ' We do not well, this is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace. If we tarry till the morning light we shall find punishment (marginal reading). Now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.' As to writing my beloved father's *Life*, only my God, and my adopted daughters, can tell what it cost me, nor how often I put it away, when I could not see to write through my tears, and when it seemed almost too great a strain on my heart."

Surely it was because she thus wrote from her heart that her writings so often went straight to the heart of those who read them.

Her Majesty the Queen has graciously given her permission for the publication of the letter about the death of H.R.H. Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck.

Grateful thanks are due to those who have kindly allowed the publication of letters : The trustees of the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's letters, the executors of Miss Nightingale ; the Master of Balliol, as trustee of the letters of the late Rev. J. B. Jowett, D.D. ; the Hon. A. E. Gathorne-Hardy, as literary executor of the first Earl of Cranbrook ; Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, as literary

executor of the late Miss F. Power Cobbe; A. R. Craik, Esq., for letters from Mrs. G. L. Craik (Dinah Mulock).

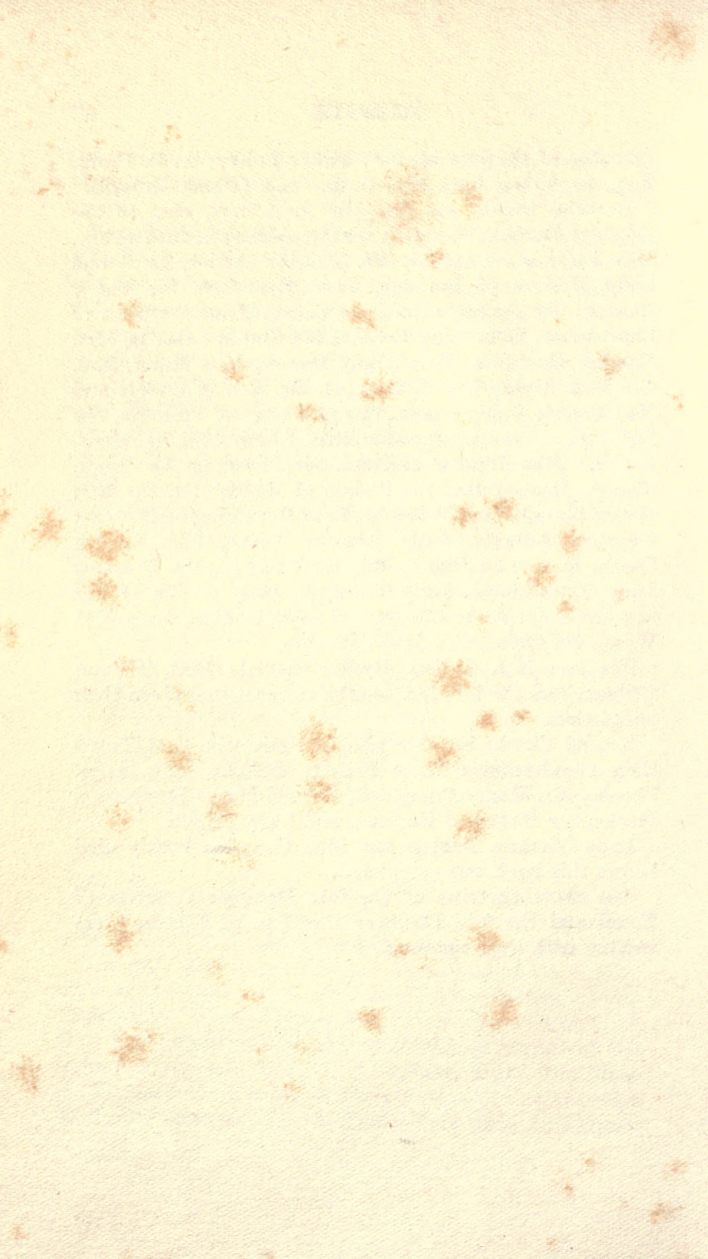
Grateful thanks are due also for letters, etc., to the Dowager Duchess of Argyll, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Miss Eleanor Alexander, Mr. Thurlow Astley, Lord and Lady Balfour of Burleigh, Lord Beresford, Sir Victor Buxton, the Dowager Countess Cairns, Anna Countess of Charlemont, Hon. Lady Colville, Mr. Burdett-Coutts, Mrs. Randall Davidson, Mr. Arthur Dasent, Miss Elliot, Mrs. and Miss Elphinstone Dalrymple, Mr. Ashley Froude and Miss Froude, Lady Grant, Viscount Grey of Falloden, the Right Hon. Lord George Hamilton, Admiral Sir R. Harris, K.C.B.; Miss Eleanor Holland, Sir Alexander Lawrence, Miss E. Macnaghten, the Bishop of Manchester, the Earl of Northbrook, Lord Polwarth, Lord Rayleigh, the Dowager Countess Roberts, Lady Blanche Smith, Miss Evelyn Smith, Mrs. John Sherer, Miss Elise Sandes, the Dowager Lady Templemore, Lady Wantage, Lady Cecilia Webbe and her sister Lady Florence Wolrige Gordon, Lady Eva Wyndham Quin, Miss Agnes Weston.

The late Mrs. Dudley Ryder, the late Hon. Thomas Pelham, and the late Mr. Charles Stewart had given their permission.

Special thanks are due also to those who contributed their recollections: Lady Frances Balfour, Miss Angel Brooke, Mr. Henry Cloughton, Colonel Henry Stephenson Clarke, the Bishop of Durham, and Lady Fraser.

Lady Victoria Buxton and Miss Georgina Hardy died before this book was completed.

The short sketches of the late Dowager Countess of Erroll and the late Dowager Countess of Kintore were written with their approval.



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LIFE OF CATHERINE MARSH

COLCHESTER

HER CHILDHOOD

1818—1829

“The child, the seed, the grain of corn,
The acorn on the hill,
Each for some separate end is born
In season fit, and still
Each must arise in strength to work the Almighty will.”
R. L. STEVENSON.

ON September 15, 1818, a child was born, gifted with many gifts, and destined to be one of the foremost pioneers of the goodly band of women philanthropists, of whom the excellent Elizabeth Fry was the forerunner.

It is an interesting coincidence that two of the most highly distinguished of these women were born, Catherine Marsh in the year before, and Florence Nightingale in the year after, the birth of Victoria, England's greatest woman sovereign, and that it was in the reign of a Queen that women first came to the front in carrying out their benevolent missions of help for soldiers, sailors, navvies, sufferers, needy and neglected ones, and others.

The great philanthropist of the Victorian Era, the Earl of Shaftesbury, was toiling hard as the champion of the oppressed and miserable; but there was an ample field left untouched, or nearly so, for them to occupy, and this short book, which could easily have been made a very long one, will tell in what way one of these pioneers carried out her special share of the work; and it is not without interest, in a life like that of Catherine Marsh, to trace in the home

influence and early surroundings the preparation for the call that awaited her.

Catherine was the youngest child of William Marsh, Vicar of St. Peter's, Colchester, whose father, Sir Charles Marsh, had won distinction when serving under Sir Eyre Coote in India, and was rewarded by having commissions in the Army given to him for his four sons. But only the eldest and second, Charles and Bartholomew, were soldiers, for William became a clergyman, and Henry, the youngest, devoted himself to politics. Sir Charles had married Catherine Case, a beautiful girl who had not quite completed her sixteenth year. Yet she had already been introduced by her mother, who was a personal friend of Pope, the poet, into the literary society of that day, where her intellectual tastes and sparkling wit had made her welcomed.

In 1806 William Marsh married Maria Chowne, the only daughter of John Tilson, Esq., of Watlington Park, Oxfordshire. It was a marriage of perfect union of heart and purpose of life, for they had dedicated themselves to Christ, and His service.

Into this happy home Catherine was born, and was described by her mother as "a fine, lovely creature," in a letter which told of the christening, and of "the fervent prayers offered for the dear Babe."

Love reigned in the home. Mary and Matilda, the elder ones, set good examples to high-spirited Louisa, William, the only boy, almost idolised by his mother, and little Catherine, the last tenant of the Vicarage nursery. She kept a distinct remembrance of her childhood, and of her nurse, whose frequent reproof, "Miss Catherine must have a few patience," she would laughingly quote against herself in her old age, for the virtue she found the hardest of attainment was to wait. Had she not possessed the eager promptitude her nurse reprov'd, she could hardly have carried out the various undertakings by which she left a track of far-reaching blessing.

Her childhood gave foreshadowings of her after life. Her power of vivid narration was a delight to other children, while in later years none who heard her tell some of her



THE REV. WILLIAM AND MRS. MARSH AND THEIR CHILDREN, COLCHESTER.

Matilda.

William.

Louisa.

Catherine. Mary.

own experiences could forget it; "her talk," wrote one who knew her then, "was radiant, sparkling, brimming over with rarest humour, and sunny with smiles."

From a child she could make, and keep, friends. Fanny Francis, her favourite nursery playmate, was her lifelong devoted friend. To her she confided a verse of four rhyming lines which she composed when about six years old. Fanny, just a year younger, heard it with wondering admiration, and said, "O Catherine, perhaps some day you will really write a hymn;" but she replied, "I have a higher ambition than that. I hope that one day I shall write a psalm!" It was never written, but her life was a psalm of prayer and praise.

In her childhood she learnt the value of prayer, and though no answer came when she asked that her eyes, which were hazel, might become dark blue, it failed to discourage her; and she had encouragements, and one of them was never forgotten by her. She was about seven years old, when her mother had so severe a fit of choking that her life seemed in danger. Catherine, in an agony of fear, fled from the house, and ran across the lawn into the church, by the chancel door which was always left unlocked. Then she knelt at the rails before the Communion Table, and poured out her heart to God, promising that if her mother's life was spared, she would come again to the same spot to renew her thanks on the same day in each year. Her prayer was answered, and she faithfully kept her little vow while Colchester was her home.

In summer evenings in the garden, in winter by the fireside, Catherine "eagerly took her place in the little group gathered round her mother's chair, and with the bright intelligence that distinguished her from infancy, listened to stories illustrating the work of Bible and Missionary Societies in distant lands. With receptive mind the child drank in the teaching that powerfully affected her character, and was to bring forth such good fruit in after days. Love and reverence for the Bible thus early fostered in her heart, grew with growing years throughout her long life, for which the Apostolic words, 'holding

forth the Word of Life,' might form an appropriate motto." ¹

These children were devoted to their parents; to be with them was their greatest pleasure, and as they grew older their father's sermons trained their thoughts and guided their faith. What their mother was to them was told by her elder daughters in a short account written soon after her death. They wrote that, rising at six o'clock, she gave her first hours to God. At half past seven she called her children to her room, and read the Bible, and prayed with them. She encouraged them to tell her frankly if they had done wrong, and if she told them of a fault, *she would only speak of it when alone with the child*, and then they knelt in prayer together.

She was also her husband's diligent helper in the parish, and she took her elder girls with her to share in any parochial work suitable to their youth. The children grew up in an atmosphere of benevolence, and good and useful work, not bounded by the narrow limits of a parish, for with their parents they took a lively and practical interest in missionary work, in the anti-slavery movement, and in other good causes, and the influence of this early training remained with each of them throughout their lives.

They had another great advantage when their grandmother, Lady Marsh, came to Colchester in her widowhood, and lived in a house near the Vicarage, and her grandchildren were often with her. She was a person of no common character, and her conversation—full of wit, wisdom and information—was equally instructive and delightful to them. This happy time ended on September 17, 1824, two days after little Catherine's sixth birthday. When the short fatal illness had begun, Lady Marsh had given the order, "Be sure that Miss Catherine has her birthday cake," and this loving thought for her was recalled by her grandchild when she was in her ninety-first year.

In later years, a remembrance of this time was written

¹ From a short sketch of Miss Marsh's life, written in August, 1900, by her niece, Lady Anstruther.

by Mary. "While we were living at Colchester, a Ball was about to be given when the Militia were called out. Our parents did not allow their children to go to dances, indeed at that time we were rather too young to take part in such entertainments. But before the day fixed for it came, our Father called Matilda and me to come to his study, and then he told us that though he did not wish us to enter into those kinds of amusements, for he believed them to be injurious to soul and body, he the more wished to give us other pleasures; and then he gave each of us a gold chain. The effect was not lost upon me; I had felt some wish to go to this Ball, but I was so touched by his love, and his loving gift, that I felt quite ashamed of my wish, and I never remember having such a desire again."

This is only one of many similar instances which showed these children their parents' careful thought for their feelings, and the pleasure it gave them to give them pleasure; yet as long as childhood lasted their parental authority was never laid aside; then it was gradually exchanged for guidance, and wise counsel, which brought about a life-long delightful friendship between them and their children.

One more remembrance must be told before leaving the story of the Colchester home, an incident in her childhood that left a lasting impression on Catherine's young mind, for it made her begin to understand something of God's overruling Providence; and in her after life she delighted to watch for it, and to trace His guiding Hand. Her father during a night journey in the coach from Colchester to London, had two companions, strangers to him. One of them made a remark showing his utter unbelief. Her father replied so gently, that the stranger, in a spirit of inquiry, told him of his difficulties in the way of belief. As each one was met and answered, with the ready wisdom, taught by heavenly lore, the long dark hours passed away too quickly, for the stranger regretted that the journey had come to an end, and he parted from his newly found friend, with a grateful farewell. The third traveller took no part in the discussion; he either slept, or seemed to sleep. Some years later the Lord Mayor of London sent

Mr. Marsh an invitation to stay at the Mansion House, and he accepted it, wondering what was the reason. He was heartily welcomed, and entertained at a banquet with other guests.

Afterwards when they were alone, his host told him the secret. He was the silent traveller in the Colchester coach. The difficulties he heard discussed were those that had long troubled him. The answers given appealed to him also, and set his doubts at rest. He found out Mr. Marsh's name, and resolved to ask him to be amongst his first guests at the Mansion House, whenever he became Lord Mayor.

In the morning the Lady Mayoress brought their little son, just six years old, and asked Mr. Marsh to bless him; this he gladly did in a short and fervent prayer. Twenty-three years after, Mr. Marsh had this letter: "You laid your hands on our son's head and prayed for him. God has blessed him by making him an earnest and good minister of His Gospel." This son was the Rev. Edmund Venables, afterwards Vicar of Great Yarmouth.

In 1829 Mr. Marsh's health obliged him to leave Colchester. Great was the grief at their departure, and that the strong tie of affection between them and their parishioners was never broken, the next letter will show.

In the summer of 1852 Catherine Marsh wrote to Mrs. Mackenzie of Belmont, Edinburgh:

"It is twenty-three years since my father left Colchester, and he had never before been able to revisit it. But now there came a special request from so many of the inhabitants, that it was irresistible.

"When we arrived the bells were ringing, and the station was crowded with friends of all classes, eager to seize the first grasp of his hand. Groups of old women stood on the way he had to pass, just to see him, and opposite the Vicarage a crowd of men waved their hats silently—they had agreed not to cheer 'because he would be missing the blessed saint who was by his side when he left Colchester.' On Sunday morning the church was crowded, in the afternoon he addressed the children. But for the evening

service, some of the poor people came long before the time to secure places where they could touch his gown, as he passed from the vestry to the pulpit. Every standing place was occupied, and as many as could sat on the pulpit stairs, while the old Beadle who had been out of office for years, came into it again for the day, took his stand on the top step, and ever and anon, peeped into the pulpit to be sure he had him safe ! I wish I had time and strength to tell you about the numbers who spoke to us, telling us how he, or our Mother had won their souls for Christ. It was a great privilege to Matilda, Louie, Lucy and myself, to come in for a share of the love they bestowed on his and her children and grandchildren."

BIRMINGHAM

HER GIRLHOOD

1829—1839

“ Her spirit so sweetly flows,
Unconscious winner of hearts,
There’s a smile wherever she goes,
There’s a sigh wherever she parts.”

SAMUEL LOVER.

IN the soft climate of Guernsey, where he was advised to go, Mr. Marsh’s health was restored, and he returned to work again, as Vicar of St. Thomas’s, Birmingham. There was no Vicarage nor any suitable house, so he took one at Edgbaston, within a walk of the parish. At that time there was great political excitement throughout the country, lasting until after the passing of the Reform Bill in 1831. The majority of his parishioners were artisans and mechanics, all keen politicians. The noise of the mass meetings, when thousands of working men met on Newhall Hill, sometimes reached Edgbaston, and Catherine (now called Katie) always remembered the alarm with which she heard it at night. Leaving Colchester had been a trial to all of them, but the stirring interests of their new parish soon filled their thoughts. Katie, now in her eleventh year, had a little class in the Sunday School. Even then she had the power of impressing what she taught, for several instances made known to her long years after prove this. Her mother, a well-read and accomplished woman, bestowed every care upon her children’s education; and she constantly watched for their souls. Nor did she watch in vain, not one of them departed from the faith they were taught in childhood and saw consistently carried into practice by their parents’ daily life.

Katie had this letter from her mother, on her twelfth birthday :

“My tenderly beloved Katie. . . . At this age our Divine Redeemer was found in the Temple conversing with the Doctors. He answered His mother’s enquiry by saying : ‘Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?’ Afterwards ‘He went down to Nazareth and was subject unto them.’ I have sweet consolation in your affectionate obedience, and trust you are copying the example of your Saviour on this point, but I fear you do not sufficiently feel that you must be ‘about your Father’s business.’ Do you feel anything towards your Heavenly Father that you do towards your earthly parents? Remember all the love that is in our hearts to you was placed there by Him, and He gave His only begotten Son to die for you. Oh think, dearest Katie, of His love, and pray that love to Him may be shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost, that the Saviour’s love in becoming incarnate to suffer and die for you, may lead you to love him with your whole heart, that you may begin in earnest to live to God, to love Him and to serve Him. Oh, my sweet child, could you know my anxious desire to see you a real Christian, I think your love to me would stir you up to seek the mercy and the grace of God. My tears and my prayers tell how earnestly I wish your eternal happiness. Our Heavenly Father is willing, Christ is willing, the Holy Spirit is willing; pray that all your unwillingness to give yourself up wholly to God, may be removed.—Your most tenderly attached Mother.”

The abundant answer to her mother’s prayers will be seen in Catherine Marsh’s life.

This autumn was spent at Aberystwith. They posted the whole way, so the journey occupied several days, and it was chiefly through beautiful scenery which Katie already appreciated. At Aberystwith they were to meet Mr. and Mrs. Leycester, of Toft Hall, Cheshire, and their children. Mrs. Marsh and Mrs. Leycester were first cousins, grand-daughters of Sir Henry Lushington. Katie and her sisters and brother quickly made friends with their cousins,

Charlotte, Emma, Laura, and Ralph; many were the expeditions they made together, walking, riding, climbing, and boating to their hearts' content.

On their return home, Katie made her first literary venture. She wrote a romantic story, signed it "Ianthe," and sent it to the Editor of *The Youth's Magazine*. She awaited the result with high hopes; but the sad sequel was the return of her manuscript, with words to the effect that "though Ianthe's story shows some promise, it is not up to our standard."

Among their friends in the neighbourhood were Archdeacon and Mrs. Spooner, whose daughter Catherine became the wife of Dr. Tait, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. After her death he wrote to Catherine Marsh asking if she could give him any sketch of his wife in her girlhood. She replied, "My first remembrances of her are of a dream of loveliness, so fair, so soft, so gentle, and with so musical a voice," and she added some short recollections. In after life they seldom met, but in the 'sixties their names were linked together with Mrs. Gladstone's as "the three Catherines," when they each had come forward to aid the sufferers in the 1866 visitation of cholera. Another neighbour was the Archdeacon of Stafford, whose daughter Olivia Hodson became Katie's attached friend.

From this time dates another strong friendship. Young Lady Barham (later Countess of Gainsborough) was detained at a hotel in Birmingham by the sudden illness of her little son.¹ Her father, Lord Roden, and Mr. Marsh were friends, and in the helpful sympathy of the family at Edgbaston this friendship between her and Catherine Marsh began, and it was carried on to the second, third and fourth generations. At this time also two attractive young Irishmen, Gustavus and Charles Lambart, formed lasting friendships with the Marsh family.

In the spring Mr. Marsh took Matilda and Louisa to the May Meetings in London, and afterwards to stay at Chilham Castle in Kent, where their hostess, Mrs.

¹ The Honourable Roden Noel, well known in his after life as author and poet.

Wildman, who was a Miss Lushington, was a cousin of Mrs. Marsh.

During their absence Katie wrote this letter :

“ Dear, dear, dear Louisa,—According to my promise I send you all the news I can. First and foremost the Birmingham Political Union is in a most agitated and agitating state. Last night Mary, Charlotte, Lizzie and myself drank tea before the evening lecture, at Mrs. Ogilvy’s, where we found Charles Lambart—Gustavus had gone back to another country, beyond seas. Soon after Mr. Garbett came in. This last gentleman informed us that Birmingham had never been in such a radically rebellious state as now; not even in the time of the actual riots. But to-day, the news of Earl Grey being reinstated in his office of Premier caused more quiet, and some noisy joy. The whole Union set off together, with drums and other instruments of music up this road, to my great delight. First came a Band, surrounded by numberless blue ribbanders, then Mr. Atwood, and others filling a car, then people innumerable, then flags, then another car, then a variety of men, women, flags, boys and girls. Thus ended the procession, but not speedily the din, clatter, noise and growling. Best love to Matilda and any other friend you may meet whom I desire to know and venerate.”

About this time Katie went with her father to a meeting at which Lord Anglesey was presiding, and the sight of the gallant soldier, who had fought at Waterloo, so stirred her young heart, that she wrote in her pocket-book a prayer for him, and with her absolute confidence in her father, she added the petition that some day he and Lord Anglesey might know each other, and that he might read the Bible and pray with her hero, feeling that this would secure the answer. Among the many interests that filled her mind as the years went by, this prayer, forgotten by her, was remembered by her God.

In this autumn a new source of delight filled Katie’s thoughts, their holiday was to be spent among the English lakes. She kept an ample journal of this tour, and the short extracts from it which follow, show her pleasant

facility in writing. She dedicated it to Fanny Francis, thus :

"*August 13th, 1832.*—To you my early and beloved friend, I dedicate (before it is commenced) the history, not only of our journey, but of my thoughts and feelings upon the subjects which may come beneath my notice—and not these only—for I am a bird of freedom, one that loves to fly in the air, swim in the sea, and run upon the earth—I shall fly off perhaps too often from the immediate subjects of my tour; but there is one, and that one is she to whom I dedicate this little book, who will over-look all its faults, and pardon all irrelevance for the sake of one who has known and loved her from the innocent hour of babyhood, even until now." And Katie was not yet fourteen !

The journal begins with a description of their setting off early in the morning, in their own large carriage, Katie on the coachbox with her brother, and it was eight o'clock before they reached Manchester, of which she wrote : " It was the scene of almost every rebellion in the three kingdoms, though that sounds very Irish ! " The next day they posted to Lancaster, where they found the assizes going on. They went to the Castle, where the court was held, and Katie wrote : " I am glad to have seen these things; I have wished for a long time to witness the procedure of the Courts of Judicature." The next day they reached Bowness. Katie wrote : " Willie and I stood on the coachbox, and I said to him ' When we pass that chain of mountains, we shall see Winandermere,'¹ and soon I pointed out a gleam of sunshine, falling on something clear." It *was* Winandermere, and an elaborate description of the scenery follows. They spent the Sunday at Bowness, and Mr. Marsh helped in the church services. Their day at home, or on a journey, began and ended with family prayers, and wherever they went Mr. Marsh invited any he met with to join with them in their evening worship.

Katie was in an ecstasy of delight at the scenery, and attempted some hurried sketches, of which she wrote : " My last attempt was of the falls of Lodore, and it was a

¹ At that date Windermere was still called Winandermere.

complete failure. They are so grand and beautiful that none but an Italian could paint such a scene ! Oh, what would I give to see thee in winter, Lodore, Lodore ! ”

Another day, at the Borrowdale Cascade, Katie in adventurous mood, climbed by what she thought would be a short cut to the head of the fall.

She thus records the results : “ Having reached a safe landing place conceive my chagrin on seeing Papa and the others much above me, in a path ascended with little trouble and less danger. Then I moralized, ‘ See, wild creature,’ I mentally exclaimed, ‘ what is the reward of ambition, thou hast only lost thy time, and made thy shoes so slippery that thou canst not walk two steps up, but thou slippest down three ! ’ ” When they were leaving Keswick, she wrote, “ I could almost cry, or lose my wits, to think it may be the last time I may ever see these splendid views.”

To the end of her life Derwentwater had a special charm for her. It was often revisited ; even when she was within two months of her ninetieth birthday she was staying in the Derwentwater Hotel, overlooking the lake, and delighting in hearing of its familiar beauty.

Another entry in the journal has a special interest from the fact that it unconsciously throws a side-light upon one of the much-discussed episodes in the life of Charlotte Brontë and her sisters :

“ *September 8th.*—Early yesterday evening at Mr. William Carus Wilson’s house, we found a large party of people waiting for tea, and for a prophetic discussion between Papa, Mr. Bickersteth, and Mr. Wilson. At ten o’clock the next morning we set off in open carriages for the Clergy School. There we admired the various clever contrivances, the steam kitchen which was done under Mr. Wilson’s inspection, the cream and butter which were excellent, and the rooms which were airy and spacious.”

“ *Sunday evening.*—We have just returned from one of the most interesting sights (of the kind) which I ever saw. The children of the Clergy School look very much better and prettier in their Sunday clothes than in their weekday

dresses. At seven o'clock Papa addressed them; the room was nearly full, with the girls, the strangers and the servants. The children sat in front, the first row being composed of the tiny ones, the youngest of whom were Agnes Neville and little Annie Gill. All were dressed in white, excepting Helen, Fanny and Agnes Neville, and a few others whose sable dresses told of the loss of a near and dear relative. The little motherless Agnes engages interest and love, the moment you behold her. She is small, with a most innocent face, soft brown hair and deep grey eyes, there is a look about her which seems to claim protection. After the exposition was over, and the singing and the prayer, when I gave a little blue morocco-bound book to Annie and Agnes, the latter lisped in her sweet baby way, 'Remember you—yes I will.' The Clergy School girls sing very sweetly, and the teacher of music, who has a fine voice, played the chants and hymns."

It will be remembered that Mrs. Gaskell, in her life of Charlotte Brontë, seemed inclined to think that the hardships of the school which are supposed to have caused the death of Maria Brontë had been somewhat too highly coloured by her sister. In the eight years that had passed since the Brontës were at Cowan Bridge School it would seem that what defects of management there may have been had been made good. Of course the many books about the Brontës were not published until many years after this journal was written for the exclusive enjoyment of Fanny Francis, so there could have been no ulterior motive in the account that has been quoted.

On their way home they stayed with their cousins at Toft Hall, a visit to which Katie greatly looked forward.

Journal.—"Here we are at last. We entered by a gateway with a pretty lodge and passed a fine piece of water, and Ralph's boat-house. At the door I heard a young, cheerful voice say, 'I'm very glad to see ye all,' and there stood Ralph, handsomer than ever, coated and much grown. We passed through two great halls to the drawing-room, which was brilliantly lighted by a large chandelier, and the chairs and sofas were covered with

black satin worked in pink floss silk. I wish you were here to enjoy this visit with me." Then followed many descriptions of the charms of the delightful old house, the library, with its coloured window with the coat of arms given to some former Ralph Leicester for "signal services rendered by him to his King and country," the portrait gallery, and the gardens with views of the Welsh mountains. There was sorrow in the home, for Laura, the youngest girl, was slowly dying. She was anxious to see the cousins she had learnt to love at Aberystwith. After they left, Laura said to her sister Charlotte, "Mr. Marsh has opened a door into Heaven for me."

The visit ended all too quickly for Katie, and with their return home her journal came to an end.

"*Edgbaston*.—Though I do not enjoy putting that date, I cannot but say I am very glad to be at home. There is an endearment in home which would make one love it were it in a wilderness. The very name, how sweet it is and what a sense of comfort and happiness does it convey. Yet there is one thing for which I feel very sorry to be in Edgbaston again. My journal, which has cheered so many lonely hours, and has been such a source of entertainment to me, must now be closed, for what should I find to write about, that would be worth your reading! Farewell then to you my own dear journal, my thanks are yours for affording me many an hour's amusement, and for recalling to my mind minute particulars of scenes, never to be effaced from my memory. And to you, my beloved friend, I would say, that if the perusal of 'A tour to the lakes' will afford you a few hours' interest or pleasure, the end of all will then be accomplished which has ever been kept in view by your most affectionate friend,

"C. M."

A little picture of the Marsh family in the following summer, is preserved in a letter to Catherine Marsh, from William Knox Marshall, written half a century later:

"June 10th, 1833, is hallowed in my memory. At your home I was received by your father when I came to be his

Curate, in that gentle, courteous manner which none possessed like him. That day was the turning point in my long life. Your brother, such a handsome young man, was at home from Oriel College, Oxford; Mary was there, a bright and charming girl; dear Matilda also, just returned from Switzerland. Your honoured mother was then an invalid. You were a beautiful girl of fourteen, with rich brown curls on either side of your sweet face, and looking full of life and hope. And, above all, Louisa, the queen of the party, was there, the most beautiful of all :

“ Still o’er those scenes my memory wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care;
Time but the impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.”

The mother’s failing health, the one shadow in that bright picture of the home circle, only a few weeks later deepened into a heavy cloud, which for a time darkened all their joy, for she died on the 24th of the following month, the birthday of her eldest daughter. She had been able, almost to the last, to converse with her husband and children, to give them many wise and loving counsels; and although life was greatly changed to them, in devoting themselves to their father, and carrying out their mother’s wishes as to their daily life at home, and in the parish, they regained the happiness which life so lived will surely bring.

This note, addressed “Papa’s Katie,” was written for her first birthday after her mother’s death:

“My darling Katie,—I loved you as a babe, I have delighted in you in your youth, and you will be a comfort to me in advancing years. You are amongst the proofs to me that ‘God is Love.’ Let us daily think of the ineffable joy of a world where love, delight, and comfort will be perfect and durable as eternity. May many a line which you may write from this desk, be the means of leading others also, to think of that world; I unite with dearest brother and sisters in giving it to you. I have a double love for you all, now.”

In a short diary Katie kept in 1834, she wrote :

*“ June 14th.—*This morning I was confirmed. Oh bitter were the tears I shed yearning for my mother’s blessing. O Holy Spirit help me to devote myself to Thee, heart and soul.”

“ July 4th, I went to the Sacramental Meeting.”

“ 6th, I partook of the Holy Sacrament. O my Saviour how thankful I ought to be for being admitted to so high a privilege. Help me to devote my whole heart to Thee. It was a very, very sad commencement for me. For about this time last year my beloved mother partook of it for the last time and I can never take it with her, until the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Oh, may we all partake of that.”

Though she felt her own sorrow acutely, Katie was not absorbed by it, instead it made her the readier to sympathise with the troubles of others. She was also always a child-lover, and entered with quick understanding into the feelings of a child. The next incident which occurred about this time is one little instance of this, and also of the fidelity of her friendship. She and her sisters were asked to befriend a little girl left in Edgbaston when her parents went to India. Katie was the first to visit her, and found her alone in a dull room, and her heart went out to the lonely child who eagerly responded to the loving voice saying pleasant words to cheer her. The visit was ending and the child’s eyes were filling with tears, which quickly changed into smiles as her friend proposed to take her to a celebrated Bazaar, with the sign of the Civet Cat. Here Katie chose a variety of little toys, asked that each might be wrapped up separately to prolong the pleasure of unpacking, and the parcel was to be sent “with the compliments of the Civet Cat.” The friendship thus begun was lifelong. Each Christmas the Civet Cat, for Katie’s gifts to Mya were still sent in that name, renewed her kind attentions. In later years Katie promoted a happy marriage for Mya, who thus refers to the long friendship:

*“ December 27th, 1901.—*When we came in from church on Christmas Day our letters were awaiting us, and one box which I at once hugged, knowing it was from the Civet

Cat ! How dear and kind and loving it was of you to take so much trouble in picking out pretty toys for me, just like your own self of old ! You will always be a real Fairy, as you were to the little girl (whose parents were in India), when she stood by your side in wonderment in the Civet Cat bazaar between 60 and 70 years ago. And now I have the greater wonderment that you still give me such treats. My Henry and I talked of you yesterday with loving gratitude. It was on March 19th, 1862, that you arranged a little drive for us, with a stroll in Beddington Park—from which we returned pledged to each other. What happiness we have had together, nearly 38 years, and how can I bless you enough for giving me such a husband ? Great love from your ever grateful Mya.”

But now to return to the home at Edgbaston, where a new interest was filling the thoughts of the sisters. It was Louisa's engagement to William Marshall, followed by a visit from his sister Honoria, who later was the wife of her cousin Sir Henry Lawrence. She charmed them all, and no wonder, for “ she had a deep love of nature, a high romance of feeling, a habit of self-communion, and a content with solitude, which would have made poetry of any lot.” ¹

On May 20th, 1834, the day after her twenty-first birthday, Louisa's marriage took place. William Marshall had been appointed to St. Mary's Church, Bridgnorth, so her new home was near enough to Edgbaston for frequent visits from her father and sisters. When Katie, now in her sixteenth year, was staying with her, she kept a journal from which the next extracts are taken, for in them her aptitude for making friends comes out clearly ; and later on it will be seen how well she retained them, for many of the boys and girls she described in this time of her youth were the friends she loved, and was loved by, as long as life lasted.

Journal.—“ We are going to spend a day or two with Lady Lucy Whitmore at Dudmaston, and this morning there came this incoherent affectionate epistle from Mary

¹ The description given of her in the first volume of Sir Henry Lawrence's life by Sir Herbert Edwardes.

Sheppard: 'Dearest creatures, Mrs. Whitmore¹ has told Lady Lucy she has heard so much of the Miss Marshes that she is anxious to be acquainted with them—Mr. Marsh she has long known and admired. Girls, what business have you to be so much liked everywhere—do you forget the "woe"?² Not everywhere, nor by everybody—you kind creature, so we shall escape it.'

"*Dudmaston*.—On our way here as I was driving Matilda in the pony carriage, Mary Sheppard met us, and jumped into the empty seat, and just then an open barouche with four greys came galloping down the hill towards us. 'How delightful,' said Mary, jumping out again, 'there are the Whitmores, now I can introduce you.' We had a cordial and pleasant greeting from Mrs. Whitmore who is beautiful and queenly, and from Emily,³ a sweet-looking girl who said she hoped she should see a great deal of us, and from her three brothers, Charlton, George, and Henry, and Henry said that this meeting so unexpectedly was 'a conventicle of a very agreeable nature.'" Henry was about fourteen years old.

Lady Lucy was a great invalid, she had not been able to come downstairs that day, but she came at night to see her young guests, and Katie wrote of her: "She reminds me so forcibly of my own best beloved mother; and when she threw her slight arms round my neck and clasped me closely to herself, I could not help my tears, for no one had kissed me just in that way since my mother died—oh how can I write that word! Then there rushed on me the memory of her sweet nightly visits—now my pillow may indeed be wet with tears, as it often is." But with the morning her spirits rose, for she wrote: "Before breakfast I found my way to the Dingle, and it looked so lovely that I longed for my jewel Papa to enjoy it with me, and after breakfast I galloped through a book called *Chatsworth*.

¹ Wife of Thomas Charlton Whitmore of Apley Park, M.P. for Bridgnorth.

² "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you" (St. Luke v. 26).

³ Afterwards the wife of Colonel Wilmot. When Catherine Marsh had passed her ninetieth birthday, she and Mrs. Wilmot were still writing affectionate letters to each other.

Then we went to see the schools at Quatt. I was ready first as usual, and danced downstairs and out on to the lawn where the sun shone brightly. At the school the mistress said the boys were very troublesome except when they were flogged, and even then they were naughtier than ever. Outside the school Matilda and I began a long tirade against the flogging system, which I declared rooted out every best feeling of the heart. This was unlucky, as our companion, Mr. Whitmore's nephew, said he was educated at Winchester, where flogging was all the order of the day. We all three grew quite warm in our own opinions, and tried hard to convince each other. My manner does not carry so much weight as Matilda's does. Shall I endeavour to alter it? No, because it would not be simply my own. I only say what first comes into my head without thinking again, and while Papa does not disapprove of it, I would rather feel myself as myself, simply and naturally with all my faults and follies."

There is no portrait of Katie in her girlhood, but a little word-picture in a valentine, sent her when she was in her seventeenth year :—

"I see thy soft eyes beaming,
Thy young cheeks, changing glow,
Thy hair in bright waves streaming
O'er thy pure Madonna brow.

I gaze upon the airy grace
Of thy form so young and light,
And look upon thy lovely face
With its smile warm, clear and bright,"

gives some idea of her young charms.

During their autumn holiday Katie again kept a journal, and of this she wrote that "it was at the request of three friends of my heart, one having been so from my sunny babyhood, the other from my glowing childhood, and the last through the chequered scenes of my early youth." And Katie was still only sixteen!

Again they went to Wales. In describing the scenery she wrote: "I love the sound of waves, and the sight of water." This love she never lost.

Barmouth was their destination, where they had arranged to meet their friends, Mr.¹ and Mrs. Bourke and their children. In her journal Katie describes an evening spent with them: "We have just returned from a pleasant evening. Mrs. Bourke is one after my own heart, I was by her most of the time and she was able to tell me latest news of Gustavus and Charles Lambart, those young companions of one of our happiest years, and certainly the merriest. The children amused us by asking us all our ages, and I had as strong an inclination to take a flying leap forwards, as some people have to execute the same step backwards, and pass myself off for the age that I wish to attain (and remain)—to wit seventeen."

Long descriptions of their different expeditions followed; one of them was their ascent of Cader Idris, when their guide told them the story of a boasting lady who, refusing to follow her guide's warning, was nearly swallowed by a bog—and Katie wrote: "He ended with a cogent piece of advice, on following the example of those ladies who submitted their own judgment to that of the Lords of Creation, advocating in fact that the world should be peopled with men, and a set of breathing automatons politely called women! When we gained the summit the sea-view was fine, and the mountains of Snowdonia, but towards Aberdovey such an extent of barren mountainous desolation I have never seen. The whole thing was like gratified ambition, always an unsatisfied feeling, devoid of the exciting interest of an ungained summit, or the even tenor of the safer valley paths. No one understands the horror of riding down a mountain who has not performed the feat. I have no objection to a frisky horse, and rather enjoy one that is given to running away. But jog-trotting down Cader Idris is another thing, and it gave us all twinges of an unpleasant sensation, it would distress me to call it fear."

They also made a night ascent of Snowdon, only to encounter thick mists, to Katie's great disappointment. The day after, they parted from their friends, who returned

¹ Afterwards the fifth Earl of Mayo.

to Ireland; and she wrote: "How short a time may serve to form friendships, even the remembrance of which may cheer many a gloomy hour in after life."

The next day their Welsh tour ended, when "the last glimpse of Snowdon called for a shout and then for a sigh" from them all.

Among the young people who met at this time were some whose names became well known in after years. There were among them a future Viceroy of India, a future Governor of a Province, a future Lord Chancellor, and the future "pioneer of women's evangelistic forces in England."¹

Katie resumed her journal a little later, when she was again staying at Dudmaston. She wrote: "When Mr. Whitmore came in he said he was expecting two young folk whom he meant to put under my charge, two nephews of Lady Lucy. I was quite pleased at the thought of anything young again, especially boys; and shortly after Lord Newport and his young brother drove up in their pony phaeton. I could not take them to my heart like those Irish boys of sunbeam memory, but they are both nice and agreeable boys. We sat round the fire, and amused ourselves with charades, riddles, 'puzzles and perplexities,' till tea time, and afterwards had some music."

The year 1835 was always dear to Catherine Marsh, for on February 13th her sister Louisa's first child was born, and was named Louisa Maria Chowne. The new relationship, of aunt and niece, opened up a fountain of love in the heart of each that never ceased to overflow. But she could not then have imagined one half of the joy and blessing that child was destined to be to her in the days to come. Sixty-nine years later, on February 12th, 1904, she wrote to this niece: "How tenderly I am awaiting the day which brought my fondly loved treasure to bless my life! How can I bless and praise our God who gave you to

¹ The Earl of Mayo, Lord Connemara, Robert Lowe (Lord Sherbrooke), Catherine Marsh. The quotation is from the Archbishop of Canterbury's letter, on hearing of her death.

us ! I know not how I should have lived without you and I am sure I should not have lived to be eighty-five ! Oh how I love you, have loved you—since you were a delicious baby of three weeks old when I first saw you, wrapped in a pale pink shawl, asleep on the sofa in the breakfast room at Bridgnorth.”

On July 4th, 1836, Mrs. Marshall's second child was born and was named Lucy Elizabeth, Lady Lucy Whitmore wishing to be her godmother. A letter of hers to Matilda on October 8th, 1836, alludes thus to another of her god-children, afterwards well known as a poet and a bishop : ¹ “ I have been reading a beautiful sermon of dear Mr. Bickersteth's. I have had a nice letter from his little boy, 9 years old, my Godson, very promising, I think, as to religion, for his age.” There was a postscript about her younger, and less promising godchild : “ Louisa's little Babe is already disobedient and undutiful, not at all minding her mother's orders to be quiet ! ” But Katie took a more hopeful view, for she wrote, “ I shall so love a little Lucy,” and she did.

It was probably in the early spring of 1836 that a friendship, which was ever a source of deep interest, help and pleasure, began for Catherine Marsh. Mr. and Mrs. Fuller Maitland, of Park Place, Henley on Thames, were among the friends Mr. Marsh made when he was living in Reading ; and he now accepted an invitation to visit them, taking Matilda and Katie with him. Caroline, the youngest but one of the large family of sons and daughters, was a little younger than Katie, and from the first meeting the two girls were mutually attracted. A correspondence between them, beginning at that time, was continued as long as they lived. They soon confided to each other their thoughts and feelings with a candour as interesting as it is rare. Some twenty years later Caroline wrote to Katie : “ Yesterday I turned out and sorted all the old letters out of my red trunk, chiefly yours. The old-fashioned square sheets crossed all over ; all our old jokes and old troubles that we have forgotten now. They are great treasures to me.”

¹ Edward Bickersteth, Bishop of Exeter.

In 1838 a firm friendship with the family of Mr. Hardy, M.P. for Bradford, father of Lord Cranbrook, began in an unusual way. Mr. Marsh and his daughters went to London to stay for a few days with the Rev. John Sandys. On their arrival he told them that Mr. Hardy, who was a stranger to them, had sent a special request that Mr. Marsh and his daughters would dine at his house that evening. Accordingly they went, and met a large family party, including the youngest child Georgina, about eight years old, who was in the drawing-room when the guests came in. Lately, she wrote some recollections of Catherine Marsh, in which, after alluding to that first evening, she continued, "Katie was soon a friend. She would have been about 20. Two years after, she came to stay with us at St. Leonards. I can think of her fine tall figure walking on the esplanade. But what we loved was that she would get up early to give time to us, the younger ones, who went out before breakfast. A clear picture is before me of dear Katie as I remember her in 1840—a handsome person with fine and commanding appearance, but with friendly and inviting expression. We just loved her. In 1847 she and her father came to us at Thryburgh in Yorkshire on their way to Scotland, and we often saw her in London, and delighted in her company, and we felt the blessed atmosphere that she brought with her always, her brightness, and hearty appreciation of anything humorous, and her powers of reception, which made her such a charming companion.

"Then I remember in 1865, when we were travelling together in the Highlands, our being turned out at some wayside inn, for the horse to rest, at about 9 o'clock in the evening—she saw some women still working in a laundry and she went in and talked to them. She seemed never to lose an opportunity."

A recollection of her appearance in her girlhood is given by Mr. Wildman's youngest daughter, now the wife of Major-General Sir Thomas Fraser:

"The first time I remember seeing dearest Katie was

when she was staying with us at Chilham Castle. She was standing in the dining-room, just after morning family prayers, dressed in a Stuart tartan silk skirt, and a black velvet polka jacket. Though I was quite a child I was greatly impressed by her appearance, her slight tall figure, handsome face and lovely white hands with taper fingers."

Her hands were like alabaster, and the shell-pink tints in her perfectly shaped nails gave the finishing touch to their beauty, and they were hands that never were idle. In her young days she excelled in fine needlework, afterwards this was exchanged for crochet, and she always liked to have reading aloud or conversation while she worked. Once there was a short-lived fashion of crochet bonnets, a silk shape covered with open crochet work, and she quickly made twenty-seven bonnets for her friends !

In December of this year Mary Marsh was married to the Reverend Francis Trench, eldest son of Richard Trench, Esq., of Freehills, Hampshire. Her father wrote to them a few days later :

"Dear Darling Mary,—If I write in a minute I can get a frank (Sir Henry Verney's) to send my love to a Frank, and to another, yet they are but one. Oh how blessed, one also in faith and hope, serving the Lord. Your dear father-in-law (with whom more than Katie have fallen in love !) and Richard ¹ the faithful minister, left us yesterday. When you left us it is true we sighed, but God made us also to laugh, because we could joy in the prospect of your mutual happiness. The married life is the happiest, the single is solitary, the widowed miserable. But joy and sorrow are comparative, and you both are in the believer's way to endless bliss.—My beloved children, your affectionate WILLIAM MARSH."

There are glimpses in letters of the busy life in Mr. Marsh's home. To Miss Maitland's reproach for an unanswered letter, Katie replied : "Your sense of justice, not to say of pity, would induce you to write twice to my once, if not more liberally, could you only see the scramble

¹ Richard Chenevix Trench, successively Dean of Westminster and Archbishop of Dublin.

after time every day of my life in this very stirring corner of the earth."

Then to Matilda, who was staying at Bridgnorth, she describes one morning: "Last night Samuel Garratt¹ arrived to stay for two or three days, and this morning at breakfast our party was enlarged by the coming of the Rev. Charles Taylor, a very nice and pleasant person, and then Johnny Purton the new Senior Wrangler comes to-day. I have been almost overwhelmed since breakfast—ten poor people to be seen, 6 notes to write, 3 letters to answer (two for dearest Papa) a parcel to be sent off at ten minutes notice to Louisa, to take an answer to an important question of William's. Six morning visitors, and calling on Miss Fosberry, putting down some accounts, ordering dinner, and finally sitting down to gasp a few breaths! Is it not always the case when only one of us happens to be left at home, all our friends and acquaintances drop in unexpectedly?"

While Mary Trench, who paid a visit to her old home, in Matilda's absence, wrote to her that, "Katie was getting on well in her new capacity as head of the household, and with house-keeping also." And she added that Katie had a great deal on her hands owing to the distribution of tickets amongst the poor, and had to search out the cases, as well as to see many at the house."

A characteristic little story of Katie at this time, was told not long ago by an old lady who had known her in Edgbaston days. She said she had a "clear remembrance of her bright face, and of her surreptitiously handing round to her friends a packet of almond sugar plums for their delectation at a missionary meeting that went on rather long."

The arduous work of his large parish had told upon Mr. Marsh's health. The death of his wife, and the marriage of two of his daughters, had taken away three of his helpers, and when he was threatened with loss of sight, he was constrained to feel he could not rightly fulfil the

¹ Afterwards Vicar of St. Margaret's, Ipswich, and Hon. Canon of Norwich, and an author.

manifold duties of his charge. Here, as at Colchester, his congregation and he himself alike dreaded breaking the strong tie which bound them together; so he went to Leamington to try the effect of a comparative rest. He had been the chief means of building a much-needed church there. The advowson was vested in the names of carefully selected trustees, that the preaching of the Gospel of Christ might be secured in that church, and they earnestly desired that Mr. Marsh should be the first incumbent of St. Mary's, as it was named. When it was found that his health was greatly benefited by the climate of Leamington, he felt he could undertake the charge of this much smaller church and parish, so the decision was made.

The time had come for Catherine Marsh to enter upon another training for the lifework which awaited her.

LEAMINGTON

HER PREPARATION

1839—1850

“She kept her line of rectitude
With love’s unconscious ease.”

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

A NEW life began for Catherine Marsh in her third home. Great was the contrast between Birmingham, a city of industrial activities and radical politics, and Leamington, a fashionable watering-place with its various gaieties. But everywhere there are poor people to be helped, the sick and the dying to be visited, mourners to be sympathised with, and souls to be sought and won for Christ, and in the district assigned to the new Church, Dr. Marsh¹ and his daughters found plenty of these welcome duties needing to be taken in hand, and soon they were fully occupied with the daily round of parish work. Many friendships also awaited them here, and Catherine Marsh quickly became popular with the younger members of her father’s congregation. There was a charm in her manner, her appearance and her voice, a pleasantness and pleasantry in her conversation, and a power of throwing herself completely into the interests of others which made her a general favourite with them, and her girl acquaintances soon were willing to join a working party once a week, which she and her sister began as soon as they were settled in Lansdowne House.²

In after years she wrote the following description of these evenings: “Among the visitors who came to

¹ He had taken his D.D. degree at Oxford about this time.

² There was no Vicarage, so Dr. Marsh had taken this house in Holly Walk.

Leamington for the season was Harriet Rutledge, an Irish girl, full of spirit, a fearless rider, an enthusiastic dancer, and an amusing talker, who was probably the last guest to be expected at our quiet tea party. I knew her by sight, but had not met her till one day when I saw her coming towards me, smiling and holding out her hand, saying 'I have heard of your tea-parties. I want you to invite me to the next, will you?' 'With the greatest pleasure,' I replied, 'but I am afraid you will not like it; you may think it rather dull.'

" 'That will just suit me,' she answered brightly, 'for I am tired of gaiety, and want a change. Is it high dress or evening dress?'

" 'As you please,' I said, 'we are not particular, full liberty is allowed; only, when the tea things are removed it is the sign for all talking to cease, and working to begin, while a book is read aloud. At ten o'clock my father, the rest of the family and the servants come into the drawing room, and he reads and explains a few verses of the Bible, and our evening ends with his prayer.'

" 'I will come,' she replied; and she came, to the no small surprise of most of the party. None seemed to listen more earnestly than she did, to my father's brief and pointed comments on the Sacred Word. None joined more heartily in the Amen which ended his prayer. As she bade me good-night she said she meant to come regularly, which she did, sometimes in a ball dress, ready for the amusement to which she went afterwards. One evening she slipped a little note into my hand asking if she could see me alone the next morning. I waited for her coming, praying for wisdom to meet any difficulties which might be troubling her mind. She came, and with hardly a word of the usual greetings, sat down beside me and suddenly threw her arms round me saying, 'Teach me how to become a follower of that Saviour who is so precious to you. I long to know Him, to love Him, and to please Him.'

"Two hours went swiftly by as we searched the Bible, and in it she saw and joyfully accepted the Gift of God,

eternal life, as she believed and received His blessed Son, Whom to know is life eternal. Then we knelt in prayer, which in my heart was nearly all praise for God's revelation of His love and power working in that true young heart. She never looked back, but with steadfast heart pursued her upward way to the blessed Home she entered long ago."

The lasting effect of Catherine Marsh's influence is shown in a sentence from a letter written to her some fifty years later by another of these young friends.¹ She wrote: "I cling to you with great love through long years and much separation, and you may care to know that after being thrown amongst all manner of thinkers, I feel there is no such true ring in any, as there is in you, and what I learned from you and your beloved father, is what I hope to hold fast to the end."

The Galton family gives another of the many instances of the same enduring friendship, for on December 31st, 1900, Mrs. Wheler, the eldest daughter, wrote to Catherine Marsh: "Emma, who is 88, and I who am nearly 93, often look back to former days when we used to see so much of each other, and wish we could meet again." While in 1908, their brother, Sir Francis Galton, the well-known Scientist, wrote to her: "It did indeed give me great pleasure to receive your (dictated) letter. How well I remember the Leamington days to which you refer, and the warm affection entertained towards you by my sisters, especially Adèle."

But none were destined to be more strongly united to her in friendship than the Sherer family. Mr. and Mrs. Sherer and their daughters Marianne and Lucy, were in complete sympathy with Dr. Marsh and his family, the elder son Henry was studying for the Bar, and John the younger for the Indian Civil Service; they were clever, pleasant, and amusing companions, but, though they had the greatest respect and deep affection for their parents and sisters, they were still young men of the world.

¹ Florence, the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Earle of Newbold Firs; she was afterwards the wife of Captain Dallas.

Among Catherine Marsh's talents was one which added not a little to her popularity; she could tell character by handwriting. Soon after her coming to Leamington, when she went to a large evening party at which almost all the guests were strangers to her, the hostess met her with a request that she would give them some proofs of her skill. She willingly consented and was led to a writing-table, and sheets of paper with unsigned sentences were given to her. A little crowd drew near, watching her face as she studied the characters, exchanging congratulations or condolences with each other, as virtues or vices were attributed to them. Then she paused, puzzled by the strangeness of one writing, as she could not see clearly what it meant, "I think the writer of this must be an adventurer," she said, and she wrote as follows :

"An Adventurer, but give him an opportunity and he will deal his blow with success. A daring that nothing could tame. If sufficient field, he will be a chief actor."

"Write that down, and give that to me," said a stranger who was standing behind her chair, and he stretched out his hand for the sheet of paper, which he folded and placed in his waistcoat pocket, saying, "Thank you, I shall never part with this." The speaker was Prince Louis Napoleon, afterwards Emperor of the French, but who then was a refugee in England. Later in this year, 1840, he made a second attempt on the throne of France at Boulogne, and it failed as completely as his former attempt at Strasbourg. He was known by the hostess, who had made this little plan to test Catherine Marsh's power of discernment, which proved to have been far greater than she expected, when, in the *coup d'état* in 1851, her guest of that evening became President of the French Republic, and greater still, when in December he assumed the title of Napoleon III.

Another remarkable success of Catherine Marsh's character reading may be mentioned here, though it happened some time later, while she was staying with her old friend the Duchess of Gordon, where she met some distant cousins of the late Duke, four Spanish Gordons, Don Carlos, with his lovely young wife, Donna Helena, and his two

younger brothers. They all were attracted by her, and she took a special interest in Donna Helena, with whom she had not a few heart-to-heart conversations. When they were leaving she asked her to accept a little well-bound New Testament. Donna Helena longed to have it, but said she must ask her husband's leave, and she feared their priest would forbid it. Don Carlos said his wife might have it on the condition that "Miss Marsh would tell their characters by their hand-writing, and tell them truly." The bargain was gladly struck, the Testament was packed, and the next day the specimens of hand-writing arrived. Donna Helena's gentle character was easily read. Two more of the specimens evidently belonged to the young brothers, pleasant characters without marked features. Then she looked at the fourth and felt aghast! Not one redeeming point could she see in it. Greatly troubled, she asked counsel of the Duchess, who advised her to send the three characters with a letter saying she regretted that she must decline sending the fourth. The reply was, that unless the fourth character was sent and given truly, the Testament would be returned. So there was no help for it, and she told the character exactly as it was shown in the writing, which "betrayed craft and cruelty, and that the writer could not be trusted with a purse containing only a brass farthing, he would cheat for cheating's sake, and he never spoke the truth except by mistake," and so forth. She despatched her letter with a trembling fear of the result, and betook herself to pray that it might not deprive Donna Helena of her Testament. A prompt answer came from Don Carlos, a humble apology for having practised a deception. He wrote that he was determined to prove whether she really could read a character truly, and to ascertain this had sent instead of his own writing, that of a distant relative, a member of the Order of Jesuits, who had been disowned by his family on account of the crafts and the crimes which were so truly described as shown in his writing.

To return to her life in Leamington. Though her day was well-filled, she always carried on much correspondence,

and she was a rapid writer. About this time Caroline Maitland had a long illness, and the following are some of the many letters that, during her recovery, passed between these friends who responded so well to each other.

C. M. to C. F. M. :

"Very full of anxiety have I felt about you, dearest Cary, you have had my prayers and have them, and when I was reading those beautiful words of the Lord Jesus, 'Peace be still,' I thought that He could say them to our hearts as easily as to the troubled waters, and when 'He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?' "

C. F. M. to C. M. :

"Thank you from my heart, my own dear Katie, for your most comforting little note. I put it under my pillow last night, and read it over again first thing this morning. If I could realise more the comparative littleness of time, I could be happier in looking beyond it, but my associations and habits of worldliness make this so difficult. I do not love my Saviour as you do, and have never earnestly given myself to His service. Yet I do desire to have something more like a personal affection for the Saviour, such as Dr. Arnold had, and Lord Teynham has, and you have, but it does seem to my wretched apprehension to be *all on one side*, if you know what I mean—that I can pray to Him, and speak to Him, but only *fancy* the answer. It is so unlike having even the glance of a human eye that tells you in a moment whether you are loved or not. I feel it may excite my gratitude, and my deepest reverence, but never satisfy my deep desire for human sympathy; when I am with you I can have it."

Catherine Marsh responded to this opening of her friend's heart, by opening her own in return: "I nearly cried with pleasure when I read that you had kept my note under your pillow. You and I suit and understand each other, my own Cary. You think we are different in our ways of loving the Saviour; perhaps by a greater variety of sorrows and troubles, I may have been rather longer thrown upon His love than you have been, and so learned to realise it more. But I have gone through just your

feelings, and what is stranger have to go through them in part over and over again. We have two natures—I had almost said two souls, natural and spiritual. At all events we have two hearts. The natural heart cleaves to earth, yearns for human love, listens for an answering voice, longs for an answering look. In part, I believe, we shall keep this to our dying day, in part God may see fit to gratify it when He has shown us clearly enough the danger of idolatry and when He has made Himself *first* in our affections. But nothing earthly will ever come up to the dreams of our glowing imaginations. ‘Thou hast made us for Thyself,’ said St. Augustine, ‘and our heart is restless till it resteth in Thee.’ Well, even when we have found that Rest, and feel we have a Rock for Strength, a Refuge from the storm, a Saviour from sin and its consequences, still the earthly heart goes on speaking and sometimes it almost drowns the peaceful voice of the new and spiritual heart, it rises up so strong. And then what can we do? We can but do, as you are doing now, fling ourselves at Jesus’ feet, and tell Him how our heart turns away from Him, and how little His love supplies the place of human love, but that still there is—faint and wavering—but still there, ‘a desire of our souls after His Name, and the remembrance of Him.’ Let us ask Him to quicken it. Above all let us pray continually, ‘Lord increase our faith.’ It is our littleness of faith which makes us unable to realise His response of love to our prayer. I have said His response, but after all, our prayer is but the response to Him. Do you think you would have any faith in His saving power, any faint desire to love Him, if He had not first talked very much to your heart, and taken you into His own gentle, though strong Hand, to train you for Himself? Be very sure that any wish to be taught how to love Him, is your soul’s reply to His words, ‘Seek ye My face.’ An almost daily prayer of mine is that beautiful Collect, ‘O God, who has prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man’s understanding, pour into our hearts such love towards Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed

all that we can desire.' It must be His gift—that love, but we can ask for it.

"My Mary and I took a bundle of tracts on Thursday and drove near the new Railway line making to Basingstoke. We got out and she sat on a mound whilst I clambered down into a sort of pit where a gang of navigators¹ was at work. The men accepted the tracts civilly, so I ventured to say a few words to them, and told them a true story about an answer to prayer. They listened kindly, and it was pleasant to feel that I had been allowed to speak to them of the Saviour. One of them gave me a sort of rough blessing as I went away."

Two more of the pleasant letters that passed between the friends must have been written about this time. Miss Maitland wrote: "Your letters and books are the comfort of my life, and I know that to tell you so is the best way of thanking you for them. The first time I read *The Daughter at Home*,² I thought it a most gloomy drab-coloured picture of life, and so it is in the outward circumstances, events there are none, there is not so much as the entrance of a decent man from the time she first sits in her morning-room, ('her early youth *passed* for she is *twenty*'!!) till her lonely old eightieth birthday comes at last. Could you bear sixty years of sour sisters, and Sunday schools? Your marks have shown me comfort and beauty however, in the midst of this insufferable dulness; and coming when my own mind was in a very depressed state, and no picture of outward pleasantry would have seemed as if it could have anything to do with me, unless in the way of contrast! I could bear to read of patient Anna, and it did me good—besides the feeling that I was reading almost with you by having your nice scratches all about the book."

Catherine Marsh had a habit of marking the passages she liked in books, and sometimes she added marginal notes.

¹ So called as their first employment was canal-making, and afterwards it was shortened to Navvy. These were to be her friends in the future.

² This book was commented on by Florence Nightingale also. See Vol. I, p. 94, of her *Life* by Sir Edward Cook.

She replied to this letter, "Oh, yes, dearest Cary, sixty years with those 'sour sisters' did seem hard upon poor 'Anna Mowbray.' But the wonder to me is how the book was so very interesting without a man's mind even so much as toning a conversation. And the beauty of it lies in both circumstances. Despite all those outward trials and needs and dulnesses—what a shady tree of peace grew up in the wilds of her heart. I suppose it does not much matter to her *now* (if she was a *real* person, as I believe), whether she was teaching her own children or other people's—when they rise up in little crowds about her in Paradise and call her 'blessed.'

"Sometimes I get such a feeling of 'the time is short' that I think, it is but a dream's difficulties I am struggling with—and soon will come the glad awakening—at other times the dream holds me down and encompasses me—and I feel the only thing which can make me realise the unreality of it, is by trying to waken others. Oh, dearest Cary—there is but One Who says to us, 'Live.' I suppose all life through we must just go to Him afresh every hour, and shall only know we are growing and strengthening, by feeling more and more our need of Him. I like you to tell me all you dislike, as well as like, in the books."

When she was twenty-two years of age Catherine Marsh passed through a spiritual experience that left its mark on her after life. Although she had written and spoken of the Holy Spirit's work, she had not realised, until she read a small volume of sermons on the subject by the Rev. J. Harrington Evans, what is revealed in the Scriptures concerning His Personality—that He can comfort, teach, bring to remembrance, command or forbid, can love and can be grieved. Then she determined that she would not cease to pray that He, the Spirit of Truth, would reveal Himself to her mind and heart. Her fervent prayer was soon answered; and afterwards she wrote to Miss Maitland: "Oh, Cary, I have learnt so to love and trust in 'the Holy Ghost the Comforter.' He was only an Influence to me once, now I *know* He is equal to the Father,

and to the Son, in the Reality of His *Share* in the Godhead, and all it is to me."

This time of Catherine Marsh's life was a very happy one. Her days were fully and usefully occupied with plenty of work in parish visiting, and care of the sick and poor; and at home with reading and writing for her father, who was gradually growing blind with cataract in both eyes. An occasional visit made a pleasant change, and she enjoyed making new friends. She wrote to Louisa from Bedwell Park :

"Sir Culling Eardley is so kind and hospitable, and he and Lady Eardley were quite affectionate at parting with us. Dr. Lushington¹ spent a day there to meet us. I never met anybody with more fascination, most courtier-like, and with a brilliancy of conversation that I have rarely heard equalled. He met us—and still more parted from us—with *relationary* warmth, and left me with the impression that I should see nothing so delightful till we meet him again !"

But a great change was coming into their lives; Dr. Marsh had met, at Dudmaston, Lady Louisa Cadogan, a dear friend of Lady Lucy Whitmore, who saw with pleasure that a sympathy of tastes and feelings was drawing them together, and she knew of their engagement just before her sudden death. The spirit in which his children met the thought of a stepmother is told in Katie's words to Matilda : "I fully agree with you that I would not have one shadow fall across our dearest father's return to happiness."

Lady Louisa's letter which follows, shows that they kept their resolve, for she wrote :

"I return you and your sister Catherine my warmest thanks for your kindness. I can but express that I hope never to forfeit the friendship our beloved Lady Lucy bequeathed to me, but I shall endeavour to acquire for myself a still larger share of that love, which may prompt you to give me the title of your second mother, a title which can never interfere with the reality which is gone."

¹ The Right Hon. Stephen Rumbold Lushington, D.C.L.

The marriage took place on April 21st, 1840, and the arrival of the stepmother was described by Katie in a letter to Louisa :

“ When we heard the carriage drive up to the door, we went out to meet them, and she kissed us kindly. We took her to her room, where I had arranged everything very prettily, and she seemed pleased with us for it. Dinner passed off tolerably ! In the morning she wrote and read for dearest Papa. I think her face is handsome, the expression and voice very pleasing ; her manner is quick, but kind. Yesterday I felt, while waiting from half-past six to half-past seven, as if each minute I grew a month older, some ten years in the aggregate. Matilda and I shed our tears in our own rooms, downstairs we are quiet, composed, tolerably conversable, young people.”

Later she wrote : “ Last evening Lady Louisa and I had a drive to Kenilworth. She alluded with great feeling to our irreparable loss. It established a confidence between us for which I felt very grateful, and wrote a little note at night to tell her so. Here is her answer : “ Dearest Katie, your letter did not long remain unopened, for I felt sure I should read something amiable, soothing and sweet. I, too, feel that the barrier is taken down, and henceforth you will (I trust) be able to pour forth your feelings and thoughts to one who would appreciate and cherish them.”

The friendship between them deepened, and the next letter, written to her stepmother during her short absence, shows that there was no diminishing in Katie's devotion to her father :

“ When are you coming back, we miss you at every turn. I wish you could have heard dearest Papa's speech at the meeting for allotments of land for the poor. It was brilliant, he was born to speak on the hustings, and persuade the people into his own opinions ! I went expecting merely to hear the lecturer—and was *electrified*, as newspapers say, and I came home thinking I would not change my father for a compound of all the Emperors,

Kings, Princes, Philosophers, Statesmen, Poets and Prelates that ever lived.

"The *innocent* coachman goes on charmingly, and the tall-legged, short-backed, high-necked horse is as steady as 'Old Mortality.'"

A little incident that happened later will show how complete the trust and love between them had become. Katie was reading aloud to Lady Louisa an article in the *Quarterly Magazine* upon the Bill for legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister, in which she came to a sentence in some such words as the following, "Why should it be wished to turn the tender kiss of the mother's sister, into the blighting breath of the stepmother?" Scarcely had the words escaped her lips, read with all the energy of her eloquence against a Bill which she heartily disliked and disapproved of, when she was on her knees before her stepmother entreating her forgiveness. But in return she found herself clasped in loving arms, and heard her say, as she kissed her fondly, "Katie darling, you could not have paid me a greater compliment."

From Lady Louisa's Sunday Diary: "*Sunday, December 6th, 1840.*—From my own pretty boudoir. I am now realising the dreams of my youth, the desires of my life. I am in a cheerful happy home, with a husband who loves me, and devotes himself to making me happy, with children too—I might almost say, at least I wish that all *own* children treated their parents with the kindness and attention I meet with here." On December 31st, she wrote, "I take leave of this year, as of an old friend, for 1840 has done all in its power to make me both good and happy."

Amongst her intimate friends was Mrs. Kingsley, wife of the Rector of Chelsea, who on one of her visits brought her eldest son, Charles, then an undergraduate at Cambridge, a young man "whose high mental gifts, force of character, and generous nature made him a most welcome guest to all the family." The visit was prolonged for some weeks, and twenty years later, Charles Kingsley wrote to Catherine Marsh:

“ I recollect your Father now—a man who had been peculiarly graceful and handsome ; tall, delicately featured, with the *air noble* of the old régime ; with a voice and manner full of suavity, even to tenderness, which you felt to be sincere from the earnestness of his voice, and the honesty of his eye. In his goodness there was no severity, on the contrary, a gentle benignity which made his presence always a source of happiness to his relatives and friends.”

Another of Lady Louisa's friends, Lady Henrietta Fergusson, came with her daughter to spend some months in Leamington. Soon after their arrival, Katie was called by her stepmother to come to her boudoir, where she found Miss Fergusson, and Lady Louisa said, “ My Katie, I want you to be very great friends with my very dear Janie of Kilkerran,”¹ and from that day a never-ending friendship began between them, and it was carried on to the third generation.

More than twenty years later, Mrs. Bruce wrote to her thus : “ My Katie, you were mine in 1842, and you have been twenty times more mine every year since. Count it up, my Darling, if you can.”

In December Dr. Marsh was to undergo the operation for cataract. Anæsthetics were not then discovered, so the time was much dreaded, and an illness often followed. Katie's distress was great. She wrote to Caroline Maitland : “ I would fain give him my own eyes if it could save anything being done to his. It would be rather a happy feeling to be blind for the sake of one so intensely loved.” Her father's sight was restored, but not without the threatened illness, in which he was blistered, leeches, and cupped, and strong opiates were given him, and through it all he was nursed by his wife and his daughters with tender devotion. On his recovery Katie wrote : “ May God enable me to spend my future to His glory, and my father's comfort and happiness.”

When Charlotte Leycester wrote to rejoice with them,

¹ Miss Fergusson was afterwards the wife of Robert Bruce of Kennet, Clackmannan, and the mother of the present Lord Balfour of Burleigh.

she added this postscript, "John Ryle¹ will be ordained on December 12, and preaches his first sermon on the 19th: would your dear father remember him in prayer?" John Ryle had been a frequent visitor at Lansdowne House, and a lifelong friendship with him began then. Fifty-four years later, on May 14, 1895, he wrote to Catherine Marsh: "You were one of the few remaining friends who remember the birthday of the old man of 79. My recollection of Leamington, of your father and the pleasant little gatherings under his roof, is still fresh and green. The gathering together unto our Coming King, and the Eternal Home—'that Blessed Hope'—are yet to come, our bright prospect."

On New Year's night, 1842, Catherine Marsh wrote to Caroline Maitland: "Our Father administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to us this evening, it was a blessed beginning for the year. The passing away of the old year has from my childhood been a time for *garnering* into my heart all I love, to ask for blessings for each, for this life, and the Life to come—some of these prayers were winging their way Heavenwards for you before the first half-hour had passed."

Hitherto Matilda and Katie had been inseparable companions, but that which Katie had feared would happen, was drawing near. Only a short time before this, she had written to Caroline Maitland on the marriage of her youngest sister: ² "No one can enter into the ins and outs of your feelings more fully than I do; the rejoicing in her happiness, and the dread of losing the close companionship which has been so cheering and endearing from childhood. I call Matilda my *gourd*, and almost feel like poor Jonah when he lost his gourd, as if I should 'do well to be angry!' (Oh, no, read *grieved* instead), whenever she may think it right to be happy away from me."

In 1842 Captain Chalmers had come from India with his fair little son, who, left motherless in infancy, had been

¹ Afterwards the first Bishop of Liverpool, a well-known writer, and an honoured leader of the Evangelical members of the Church of England.

² Jane Octavia Fuller Maitland, married Robert Harris Valpy.

his constant companion and comforter. No father and son could be more to each other than they always were, for a beautiful friendship made them one in heart. Captain Chalmers left the important post of Superintendent of Mysore, to return to England in order to take Holy Orders, and he came to stay in Leamington that he might confer with Dr. Marsh on the subject. Here he met his future wife, for he felt that if he could win Matilda Marsh she would be a perfect wife for himself, and a perfect mother for his little son. He did win her, and early in the next year they were engaged, and their marriage was to take place in September, after his ordination.

Before September came Lady Louisa was called away. She had suffered from severe headaches, and went to Birmingham to consult Dr. Birt Davies. The rest is told in the next letter from Katie to her sisters, Mary and Louisa.

"We were going home on August 12, but the night before, my remembrance of ten years ago told me there was ground for fear, and so I would not leave her. When her head was resting on my shoulder, she said, 'The Lord reward thee, my own child, for thy tenderest love and nursing,' and she spoke of her three years with us, as the happiest of all her life. We sent for Dr. Davies, and he could only confirm our fears. She was quite calm and even cheerful. She gave her last directions to Matilda and me, and then she asked to be buried by our darling Mother. Our beloved father was beside her, and gave her his last blessing; I repeated her favourite hymn,

'Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy Bosom fly.'

She said 'beautiful'—it was her last word, and in less than an hour she was with her Saviour."

A few days later Katie wrote to Charlotte Leycester:

"Her death has brought darkness over everything. No one ever amused us so much and so pleasantly. There was a spring about her feelings which astonished us. Not long ago I said to her, 'I love to sit down in the green garden

of your heart; it has so much more freshness of feeling than mine.' With this she had such solid qualities to value and love, and a day-light sincerity and nobility of character, with increasing spirituality of mind. When my father was speaking to me of his hope that Frederick Chalmers would live with us after his marriage to Matilda, I said to him, 'I bless God many times in the day that I have formed no sort of link which can prevent me from living for you.' He replied, 'My Darling, you must not pass by any more opportunities of possessing a home of your own, for the short time with me.' To him I only said, 'The term of it is with God; but be it short or long, I would rather have it with you a thousand times, than have a long life of happiness with any one else in the whole world,' and then he gave me his blessing for it. But *the short time* sank like lead into my heart."

This good counsel to a stepmother was afterwards given by Catherine Marsh. "Our stepmother won our love, not by her talents, which could only command admiration, nor by her spiritual mind, which won our reverence—but by her generous desire always to share our beloved father with his children. She scrupulously avoided anything approaching to making the slightest complaint of us to him, or to any one—this we learnt from his testimony, and from the testimony of her friends and relations. In a single sentence—she united our father more closely to his children."

When Captain Chalmers had been ordained, as Curate to Dr. Marsh, his marriage with Matilda Marsh took place on November 27th, 1843, and it was settled that they should live in Lansdowne House, to Katie's thankful happiness.

Now she was again her father's constant companion. She went with him to Beau Desert, where Lady Anglesey, who was Lady Louisa's sister, had asked him to come, to help her in her sorrow. Katie's forgotten prayer for Lord Anglesey had already had a partial answer when her father had been staying at Beau Desert with his wife, but

now it was to have a literal fulfilment. She wrote to Matilda: "We are a large party in this old royal-looking place, and I am thankful we came, for this afternoon when it was dusk, Lord Anglesey said to me, 'I want some Scriptural instruction from your father,' and as I went to fetch him, I said in my heart, 'You cannot help asking this, for eleven years ago, *I booked a prayer* for this, when Waterloo was very attractive to my mind!'"

Through all the strain of the sudden sorrow, she had kept up bravely for her father's sake. She had said to him, "To be even a rushlight to you, who have been such an earthly sun to me, is worth living for," but soon after their return home, she became very ill with inflammation of the lungs, and it left her needing great care through that winter. But in the spring she was able to go with him to Oxford. She tells of the visit, and the effect of the journey, to Caroline Maitland, who had asked her to come also to Park Place.

"If I were fit for the pleasure I should like it of all things, but I find by my few days at Oxford that I am unfit to be away from home just yet. We posted there; but 40 minutes in a train, going home, made my brain feel stirred up with an iron spoon! Would you not like to have heard the oldest father of the Jewish cause preach in the University pulpit the first sermon for it ever preached there? The old Dons were kind to me. One of them told me that my father 'was the handsomest man who had graduated in Oxford, not to say the best.'"

It is strange in these days to read the effect of forty minutes in a train!

Later she wrote again:

"Now I will go to Park Place, and ride with you with all my heart. I have given up riding here, because it takes me from my father too long, and makes me play with young people instead. But this bright blessed spring time makes a child of me—I feel an olden-time spirit leaping up in my heart and saying, ride I must—make merry I must—then I stroke it down and say, No, much happier to be living more for my father, and my sick and sad.

But when I come to you, and have not got my father, or my duties, *then* I will ride with you and enjoy it."

After her return home Caroline Maitland must have asked her about a question of conscience, and this is the reply :

" My Cary, *If you only* feel bound to obey the commandments our Lord quoted in St. Matthew xix. 18, 19, you might then feel free to use bad language, and make graven images ! The Sabbath was part of the Jews' duty to their God, and it is now part of the Christian's duty to his Lord—for it is his ' Lord's Day,' not his own. As to the exact mode of keeping it—whether going three times to Church—and teaching in three schools—or twice, and teaching in none, or dining early with cold potatoes, or having hot soup for comfort's sake—or shutting yourself up all day (except in the walk to church)—or taking a walk in the cornfields and blessing God for their blue flowers, as well as going to Church—' let no man judge you.' But St. Paul does not say *don't judge yourself*.

" My Cary, do read Elliott's *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, three volumes, carefully. It has opened to my head and heart a new vista of interest for which I thank God.¹

" What would you say if I told you that *your* Wordsworth gave me half an hour's talk nearly all to myself, about Arnold, Southey, etc. ! "

The great poet was staying with friends at Leamington, and Dr. Marsh and his daughter were invited to meet him.

Dr. Arnold's life, by Arthur Stanley, was published this year, 1844; she read it with great interest, and in a letter to Louisa said :

" I like men with metaphysical minds; one little disquisition which sets one thinking, is worth whole pages of eloquence which leave one only admiring.

" This morning I was able for the first time for some weeks, to get up the Newbold hill before breakfast, and to sit there reading my Bible and thinking for an hour, the only sounds were dear little Honie's merry laugh as

¹ She did not mention that as her time for reading was limited, she got up every morning at five o'clock to secure the two hours she wished to give to reading this book.

she played in the sandpit, the singing of birds, and cooing of wood pigeons. The glorious sunshine was bathing the distant country in a flood of light, the sparkling dew on the grass—the quiet little woods in the foreground, and the clear balmy morning air, were delightful. It almost bewildered me to recollect the numberless answers to little prayers, as well as to greater ones, that I have had since I last sat thinking there, but they all flowed into one stream—‘What shall I render unto my God for all His goodness?’ I do desire that each sorrow, and each joy may lead me closer to my Saviour, to live more entirely for Him, to Him, and with Him, and more unselfishly and entirely for the happiness of those around me.”

Among their first friends in Leamington were Lady Emma and Lady Augusta Dalzell, and their brother Lord Carnwath and his wife, who were often staying with them, and few days passed in which the families did not meet. Young William Marsh was now in Holy Orders, and when he came home he always met these friends of his sisters, and an attachment grew up between him and Lady Augusta, a fair and gentle but delicate girl; their engagement was welcomed by all, and the preparations for her marriage were begun. At first she seemed to be in good health, but anxious symptoms appeared, and gradually it became evident that there was no real recovery for her. Catherine Marsh wrote of this time :

“At the first approach of danger she naturally recoiled from the thought of death, and stedfastly determined that she would recover. She refused her consent to any delay being made in the preparations for her wedding, whilst she strove to impress upon those around her, her own rose-coloured hopes of recovery. So her wedding-dress was altered to suit her wasting form, and her devoted family allowed no note of alarm to reach her ears. But long before this time, she had admitted me into the deep confidence of her heart, and I remembered our mutual agreement, ‘which ever of us is to be the one to pass away first, shall be told by the other, when she knows that the time is drawing near.’ When this promise was made known by

me to her family, her eldest brother said, that as they all saw how unhappy it made her, when she was aware of even an unfavourable symptom in her state—now perfectly hopeless—how could they venture to let her be told that death was indeed at hand. Nevertheless, at last the leave was given that the sacred promise might be fulfilled. It was hard to meet her smiling welcome whilst being the bearer of the heavy tidings. Little was said, but she quickly understood the sad purport of the few words; and she turned away her sweet face as if in displeasure. A silence followed, and in the stillness, both hearts were communing with their God. Then her little white hand clasped mine, and with a few gentle tears, she said, ‘All is peace. My strong will is now on the side of the will of my God—and I know that ‘God is Love.’ Thenceforward, the love of the Saviour, whom she had before known and trusted, took the first place in her heart, even above the dearest of earthly ties, and her peace was deep as a river. A little while later, passing by Death as one unnoticed, seeing only the Face of Him Who is the Resurrection and the Life, she calmly fell asleep, to awake in His Likeness.”

There was no alloy of morbid feeling in Catherine Marsh’s over-flowing sympathy; she had a spring of spirit which enabled her to rise out of sadness, and turn her thoughts into other channels, and soon after this time she began to follow the events which were passing in Parliament with an anxious interest. Sir Robert Peel’s Bill for the endowment of Maynooth College was before the House of Commons, and she had written to try to influence Caroline Maitland on the subject. This is her characteristic reply :

“About Maynooth I have come to think as you do, and though rather slowly at first—now quite strongly; and nothing helped me so much to this as Mr. Gladstone’s speech. At first I was rather inclined to look on the other side, not exactly to take it, but just to ask, whether the seven millions of Irish Roman Catholics have not a right to an equal Union, and whether this would not require that we should (partly with their own money) establish for

them the best religion we *can* give them because the only one they will receive. If a child refused all food unless it were mixed with poison, would you make him an arsenic pudding or not ! On the whole the more I think about it, the more clear it seems to me that *nothing* can justify our support of what we believe to be idolatry. All that can be said on the other side cannot show it to be our duty to teach the people a *sin*. I only tell you what my ponderings have been, and these partly out of a love of fairness, and partly out of pure perversity because every one I heard was so violently set against it. Esther ¹ is a very Luther; I am afraid some day she will be burnt. Mr. Gladstone certainly made a very feeble fight. If he can say nothing better than that, his case is poor indeed."

Catherine Marsh quickly sent the following reply :

"You are too clever to live ! I had been busy making a convert of old Lord Stanley of Alderley (a Whig)—to give his proxy on our side in the House of Lords, and your illustration of the arsenic pudding, finished him ! Alas, you were not so successful with Lord Carnwath. He and I have as nearly as possible split forever on the subject, but we have thought better of it and made it up. Now I have said nothing yet of India,² though it has been occupying most of our thoughts. What a mournful story has our Military been. Olivia Hodson's brother³ was there, and Mr. Nugent's⁴ brother, and their letters are quite thrilling."

In the autumn of 1845 she went with her father to Scotland, where their first visit was to the Duchess of Gordon, at Huntly Lodge in Aberdeenshire. They went next to Logie Elphinstone, the home of Sir Robert Dalrymple Elphinstone, whose only daughter had been one of the party at Huntly Lodge. Katie described her to Caroline Maitland :

¹ Esther Fuller Maitland, afterwards the wife of the Rev. Ridley Herschell.

² This refers to the second Sikh War, in which Henry Lawrence had his part both in the battle of Sobraon, and in the troublous times that followed, when his life was constantly in peril.

³ Hodson, of "Hodson's Horse."

⁴ Richard Nugent, an Irish gentleman devoted to Dr. Marsh. His daughters in later years were Catherine Marsh's valued friends.

“Read the enclosure, and join me in praying for the writer. She is a fine creature (like her hand-writing), fearless, generous, gentle, noble, and full of fling—very clever, and the idol of her brothers. At Huntly she came to sit by me at dinner ‘to talk against my *evangelicalism*,’ as she called it—she having taken up Tractarian views, and she took a love for me, as I did for her, and we write to each other occasionally.”

Here is one of her letters to Miss Dalrymple :

“You write that you are dissatisfied with your *system*. Throw away all *systems* then, and come as a child to the Word of God. Read Genesis III., St. John III., and Romans III., with earnest prayer that the Spirit of Truth may ‘guide you into all Truth.’ Read them again at night, and then read Ephesians II. and be happy. You should not play with straws while the crown of glory hangs unnoticed over your head—bought with the King of Glory’s Life-blood, bought for you.”

The following fragment in her own writing was found among Catherine Marsh’s papers, with no date :

“About half a century ago I met Harriet Dalrymple at Huntly and our friendship began, and it grew and strengthened till Death did us part. In my first visit to Logie we had a picnic to the top of Benachie. There I met Tom Leslie, a tall handsome young Highlander. When it was time to descend, Harriet said, ‘Your English feet could never manage safely the steep side down which we go, you must let Tom Leslie’s arm keep you from falling.’ During the descent we became friends, and he told me he had loved Harriet from his boyhood, and added : ‘Tomorrow I go to China, to make my fortune. Do promise me to keep Harriet from marrying anyone while I am away, for ten years I fear.’ ‘Would you ask me to bind the wind?’ I replied, ‘but I will do my best to say a good word for you.’ ” The sequel has been written by her.

“Many years ago a young friend of mine went abroad to make his fortune, and succeeded far beyond his expectation, and returned to marry the one love of his life. But soon a cloud arose, his health began to fail. That

Autumn I was staying in their neighbourhood, and his wife wrote to tell me that his malady was a fatal one, but that he was determined to banish the thought of death by a round of amusements, and she asked, 'Could you come to us, and give a message from God to him?' The summons came just in time, for it was my last day. There was no telegraph near, and their house was some miles from their wayside station, where no conveyance was to be had. Yet I felt I might trust in God to enable me to obey the call, so I went by the next train. At their station I saw my friend's carriage waiting—sent for visitors who failed to come. Thankfully I went in it, and at the door sent in my card with 'a tramp asks for a night's lodging' written on it, and my friends came swiftly to the door with a warm welcome. There was a large shooting party, and no opportunity in which to give the message I had been asked to bring; but at night the anxious wife and I had prayed together. At breakfast I sat by him, and ventured to tell him a true story; at the end he said, 'Well, that was a happy man, though he was a dying man.' Afterwards he added, 'I hope you are not going to talk to me about death.' 'Oh, no, dear friend,' I replied, 'but of life in a living Saviour, a life that has no ending, and He offers it to you now.' Then my time was up, but he asked me to promise to come to see them when they came to London. On their arrival the wife wrote, 'Come as soon as you can. I fear he is worse, but he still drowns the thought of danger in a variety of pleasures.' I found him surrounded by a large party, till it was time for me to leave, when I could only say to the dying man, 'We are praying that the God of Hope may fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' With a despairing look, he answered, 'Joy and peace, strange words in such a world of misery and hopelessness as this.' That night I wrote, after fervent prayer, a letter to him, sending with it a little copy of St. John's Gospel, in which I marked these passages, Chapters i. 19, v. 24, x. 10. Days of suspense followed while no answer came. Then came this letter. After thanking me for 'words of peace and comfort,' and asking me to come

again, he wrote, 'the little St. John is *most* useful to me, and it is a help to have those passages *marked*, because I find them without search. Oh, what glorious words they are. I feel they are mine, though I deserve them not; but though I have fully earned "the wages of sin which is death," I do feel that eternal life is the gift of God, and I look forward in humble but *sure* confidence to my death, which I think is not far away.' In this peaceful faith he shortly after entered into Rest."

But it is time to return to the Highland tour which brought this long past story to mind. After a visit to Caroline Maitland's sister, the wife of Mr. John Colquhoun, Katie wrote, "I enjoyed being with, and making friends with, your handsome Fanny's charming boys and girls, and I loved her little Lucy,¹ who clung to my arm, and would have gone away with me like a tamed wren." Their last visit was to Belmont, the home of Lord Mackenzie (a Scottish Law Lord). Mrs. Mackenzie was a daughter of Lord Seaforth, and their children were both good and talented.² Belmont was near enough to Edinburgh to be a centre for gatherings of the learned men and Christian philanthropists who abound in that city, and Dr. Marsh and Catherine thoroughly entered into all the interests of that visit.

Just after their return Louisa's seventh child was born, on August 29th, and was named Agnes Charlotte Augusta; and on October 5th the mother died. In the next letter Catherine Marsh tells all that happened:

"It was Sunday afternoon, Matilda and Frederick were at Church, and after reading my father to sleep, I was sitting with Lucy and little Charlie, when an express messenger came from Bridgnorth with a note which I opened and read—"Mrs. Marshall died suddenly this

¶ ¹ Afterwards Mrs. Walford, well known as the authoress of many very popular novels.

² The Memoir of Francis Mackenzie, with notices of his brother Henry, shows that they were young men of high character and extraordinary promise, but they both died in early manhood. Their sisters, Fanny and Peniel, were known as devoted leaders and workers in all the benevolent Christian work carried on in Edinburgh.

morning.' Those words seem burnt into my memory. I see them when I read, when I pray, when I vainly try to sleep. I need not write what it was to break the tidings to my father, and to hear Matilda's cheerful voice, knowing there was but a moment more for its cheerfulness. Then, the dreary night journey, and the arrival, to miss her warm embrace, her radiant smile of welcome, the music of her laugh, and that firm free step! There she lay, her dark blue eyes closed, her glossy black curls round her beautiful face, lately beaming with every varied expression of her brilliant intellect—stilled in death. Then, her husband's tender but submissive grief, and the gentle children's weeping for their mother, wrung our hearts.

"Louisa was to go downstairs that day. Louie and Honie said their texts to her at eight o'clock. About eight-thirty, her bell rang, her husband rushed up from his study, and the nurse from the nursery, and found her breathing, but unconscious, and in a few moments she was gone."

Louisa was buried at St. Thomas's Church, Birmingham, and after the funeral Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers returned to Leamington, taking some of the children with them. A few days later Katie wrote to Matilda, "*Last night for hours every thought seemed to turn into 'Mrs. Marshall died suddenly this morning.'* To-day I shall go and see a few sick people, which will be a turn of thought and an interest. I turn to it as a consolation."

The next day she wrote to her father: "I had some snatches of sleep last night, after a walk alone in the dusk to see a dying girl, and an old man. It soothed my heart to find I soothed that poor girl, and I came home with something like rejoicing within me."

It was a long time before she recovered from the effect of that sudden shock of sorrow. Soon after her return home she wrote to Caroline Maitland:

"I am weak now, and often suffering, my nerves have been so shaken that our Doctor has ordered me to sit still, and do nothing, and threatens me with serious illness if I disobey. And the worst is, I sink with a sort of stupid

submission into this idle life, and so love the quiet of my own room where I stay till dinner-time (when I am allowed to go downstairs)—that it shows me I am not loving my ‘*active service*’ as a soldier should, who knows how to endure hardness. I do sympathise with you about little vexations, and crossings of will. The best way of meeting them is to look on them as little bits of our daily cross, to be borne with patience and cheerfulness *through prayer at the moment*. This afternoon that lovely young Miss Stewart Mackenzie called, I was so glad to see her.”¹

The enforced leisure gave her the time for reading which she had often wished for, and this letter to Caroline Maitland shows she had taken advantage of it.

“Your letters do me good like the freshness of Spring, and not the less for having about them the warmth of Summer, with a touch now and then of the mellowness of Autumn—and sometimes, the least bit in the world, of the severity of Winter! I like to hear of your vast reading. I have just been finishing *Eöthen*, and *Memoirs of Sophia Dorothea, Wife of George the First*, which pained me too much to be enjoyed. But I read McCheyne again, with increased advantage! Lady Hester Stanhope, with mingled interest, amusement, and disgust. Now I am reading *The Spirit of the Age* with zest—but I cannot yet answer for it enough to say more. Henry Martyn’s *Journals*, the two volumes, which I read seven years ago, and did not much care for, I have re-read with deepest interest, and I hope some profit, as the most powerful and faithful anatomy of the human heart, or rather, the young Christian’s heart, next to the Psalms of David.

“I have been thinking much of those wonderful words, ‘Your life is hid with Christ in God.’ ‘Hidden’ so that the Adversary cannot see where it is, to get it away, or destroy it. ‘Hid with Christ in God,’ where the Son hath been from all eternity, in the Bosom of the Father—*there*

¹ This is her first mention of one who afterwards became a devoted friend of hers, and as Louisa Lady Ashburton was well known for her talents, her charm, and her benevolence.

is our life hidden. I would not have it in my own weak keeping, no, not for a moment."

Towards the close of the year she wrote again to Caroline Maitland: "Louie was left specially to me by her darling mother, and I wished to keep her always; but I could see her father wished her to be educated with her sisters and brothers, and I think they need her beautiful example; but I dread parting from her. We miss Louisa more and more—yet I love to think of her high-beating heart hushed into eternal tranquillity."

In February, 1846, Catherine Marsh passed through a strange experience, which she described in the following verses:

THE TRANCE

(St. Luke xxiv. 32)

"Leave her, for consciousness is gone,
And rapid breathings faintly drawn
Betoken that to-morrow's dawn
Will see her die."

The skilled men said, and left her there;
But tender hearts with trembling care
Still watched by her with yearning prayer,
And tear, and sigh.

A horror of thick darkness fell,
A loneliness no tongue could tell,
Alone, in neither Heaven nor Hell—
Till bright rays shone.

They shone as from God's glorious Face,
In loveliness no hand could trace,
She saw His majesty and grace,
Saw none beside.

His Voice broke silence soft and low,
"For thee I died on earth below,
And made thee as the driven snow
In My Heart's tide.

The Love that saved thee is Divine,
It cannot change—this Heart of Mine,
For evermore it must be thine,
My gift and grace."

He ceased; and she to life returned
Obedient, but with heart that burned,
And ever since has deeply yearned
To see His Face;

Through death intenser life to find,
And moulded to His Will and Mind,
Her soul to her Beloved to bind
Eternally.

After her recovery she wrote to Caroline Maitland :

“ God kept my mind and heart in His peace when I was facing death. But, oh, Cary, Frederick Maurice’s system (as it comes out in his Kingdom book), and all forms and ceremonies and sacramental systems, were weak as water to lean upon, as shadows that fled from my grasp in the nights of struggling for breath, but this was my Rock to rest on, ‘ God so loved the World, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ ”

When she was able to begin her every-day life again, though her first and foremost thoughts were concerned with spiritual things, this by no means prevented her from taking an active interest in all that was going on in her home, and in public life. On June 26th in this year Sir Robert Peel’s Government fell, and the coming General Election filled her thoughts. She wrote to Caroline Maitland :

“ What are you doing about the elections? Influencing everyone you meet, I trust, to vote only for the candidates who take the Protestant pledge. I send you a copy. England is standing on the threshold of her destiny—the blessing, and the curse seem suspended above her—let us all do our utmost by God’s help to gain for her the first, and to avert the second.”

[*The reply.*]

“ I cannot see exactly what good it can do to ask people to sign that pledge; because no one but an honest right-thinking Protestant man would be willing to bind himself in that way, and such a man would vote right without being bound. I would, with all my heart and soul, use any little grain of influence I may have, to get people to

vote for the right man, but I would rather do it in the way of giving about strong well-written pamphlets to bring people's feelings right; and then leave them free to vote as they find it in their hearts to do."

Catherine Marsh had long wished to see the beautiful scenery of Switzerland, and this autumn her father proposed that their holiday should be spent there, and to complete her pleasure, Louie was to go with them; Charlotte Leycester also joined the party. A few short extracts follow from the journal which Catherine Marsh kept of this tour. The first part of it is lost, the second begins towards the close of a very anxious time, when Louie was just beginning to recover from typhoid fever contracted in the Hotel at Basle, on their return journey.

Journal.—"As I went up from the *salle-à-manger* to-day a tall lady stood on the landing and opened her arms to me. 'My Katie.' 'Dearest Janie.' It was my beloved Jane Fergusson—and her strong kind heart, and hopeful faithful spirit, strengthened me, and before she and her friends left the Hotel, my heart was lighter about Louie." Another day she wrote: "At *table d'hôte* Charlotte recognised in her neighbour a man whom she had often seen in Rome. He introduced himself to her as the Pope's Chamberlain, and said, 'The Pope is a brave man, he is making great reforms'; she replied that she wished he would make one more—spread the Bible through Italy. He answered: 'I cannot discuss that matter, but you will all be with us soon.'"

When Louie could travel they returned by the Rhine to Cologne, visited the Moravian Settlement at Neuwied, then by easy stages to Brussels, and thence to Dunkerque. In her *Journal* Catherine Marsh wrote of a beautiful view which they had seen that day: "I delight in expanse, under every possible circumstance. Is it not a touch of the immortal within one, which makes one dislike a limited view, as one does a narrowness of thought or feeling? We are made to extend our prospects to the whole created universe, and to expand our interests to its countless

inhabitants—when Time shall give place to Eternity. We passed through Douai—whence the crippled version of the Bible was sent forth, and turned to our own full and true one with deeper thankfulness.” After a stormy passage lasting eight hours from Calais to Dover, they returned home on the 9th of October.

With the approach of winter the black cloud of famine threatening Ireland burst upon it—an appalling calamity, culminating in a pestilence. At the same time part of the Scottish Highlands suffered from the same scourge. How little impression the urgency of the case had made upon the Government is told in Lord Beaconsfield’s life. Sir Robert Peel’s Cabinet met at the close of the session, and he suggested a policy of opening the ports to the import of food, by an Order in Council, and after Christmas to bring in a Bill to modify the corn laws. But Lord Stanley, who had more knowledge of Ireland, showed the uselessness of the plan, “pointing out quite truly that what was required by the Irish cottiers was, not reduction of price, but the absolute means of purchase.” Nevertheless, after four meetings in the course of a week, the Cabinet separated without having come to any decision.¹

A resident in Cork wrote to a friend at Leeds, on *December 20th*: “I went to Skibbereen on the 15th, and give an instance of the one town-land I visited as an example of the state of the entire coast district. I knew I should have to visit scenes of frightful horror, so I provided myself with as much bread as five men could carry. On reaching the spot the wretched hamlet seemed deserted. I went into some of the hovels to ascertain the cause, and the sights were such as no tongue could convey an idea of. In the first, six famished and ghastly skeletons, to all appearance dead, were huddled in a corner on some filthy straw, their sole covering a ragged horse-cloth. I approached with horror and found by their low moaning they were alive. They were in fever, a woman, four

¹ *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, by William Flavelle Monypenny, Vol. II, pp. 334-5.

children, and what had once been a man. It is impossible to go through the detail, suffice it to say, that in a few minutes I was surrounded by at least two hundred of such phantoms, by far the greater number delirious from the famine fever—their yells are still ringing in my ear, and their image fixed on my brain.”

Meanwhile when the distress began to be known in England, private benevolence from various sources was sent to their aid. Many others, besides Dr. Marsh and his family, entered into correspondence with some of the clergy in the famine districts who were working bravely at their posts, helping their suffering parishioners, Roman Catholics and Protestants alike.

Catherine Marsh now turned to good account her talent for telling characters by hand-writing; instead of free descriptions as before, she charged half-a-crown for each, and thus earned a good sum for the famine fund. She also found other ways of helping, which she told to Caroline Maitland :

“ I had given my little all to Dingle, and was going on merrily without a sixpence in my purse, when more harrowing letters came. So I asked my family to give me what they meant to spend on a bracelet for me with my Louisa’s hair, that I might send it at once. I can put her hair into a little parcel, and wear it near my heart. I have great sympathy with your savings in your dress expenses. There is an old bit of velvet of mine which has gone through the various transmigrations of cardinal cape, Polish pelisse, and visite ; now *it* wanted long ends, and to make them, new velvet and fur ; and *I* wanted the cost, and gave it to the famine box—to make two ends *meat* ! ”

When 1847 began, the misery was increasing, the Government having failed to devise means to meet the emergency. The Irish resident gentry were brought to the verge of ruin—with some the ruin was complete—through their efforts to keep alive all within their reach. The Protestant clergy and the Roman Catholic priests worked day and night for the same purpose, all these noble efforts were largely helped by gifts from England.

Dr. Marsh's house became one of many centres of relief, and he said of the sufferers, "the more they differ from us in politics or religion, the more anxious we should be to prove that charity (Love) rises above all these things." The work carried on is described in the letters of Catherine and Caroline.

C.M. to C.F.M. :

"We have had a meeting for the Highlanders, with a first-rate speaker, Mr. Campbell of Monzie, late M.P. for Argyllshire, and £320 collected at the door! We have now raised above £1000 here for Irish and Scotch, and we don't mean to stop. How I envy you for being able to give your best morning hours to reading; excepting my Bible-reading before breakfast, the whole morning is taken up in writing or business. Send me the exact title page of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, my book-club man declares it is only for artists!

"One of my Irish correspondents, the Rector of Caheragh, writes that he 'is struck down to the earth, his wife has caught the famine fever, and she lies at the gates of death.' He asks us to pray for him, and his children. He is still taking care of his afflicted flock. Pray for her, it does one good to enlarge our sympathies. He says she is a blessing to her country as well as to her family, and that he never saw her happy childlike peace equalled." Caroline's letter crossed Catherine's.

"Pleasant Katie, I am making feather screens, to sell for the Irish famine fund. The £10 I sent through William, were doubled in his hands. Now, I have decided to work a potato crop,¹ not the root, but the flower, which is very pretty, and a little green ball, by its side."

The rejoinder: "Long life to your potato crop, and all your other exertions for the famine sufferers. Do you know your hand-writing is quite altered since you took up this work with so much energy. It has gained an expansive power. You know I am a chryrologist, I hope that fine word means hand-writing! Thank God, you

¹ Miss Maitland had been promised £5 for the fund, if she would work a waistcoat with this pattern on it.

and I have helped to pray that good and gifted wife at Caheragh Rectory back to life."

Sunday brought a welcome rest in Catherine Marsh's fully occupied life. She had learnt to love it in her childhood, for her father's Saturday good-night was "a *good* day to you to-morrow," and Sunday morning was greeted with gladness in their home. She grew up with a great value for the services and festivals of the Church of England, which may often be seen in her letters.

This spring she wrote to Caroline Maitland :

"I hope you had a happy Easter. For Good Friday I took the thought 'Herein is love.' On Easter Even I felt a sort of repose between the mournful thankfulness of Good Friday, and the joyful thankfulness of Easter Sunday. I thought the Easter Even Collect one of the finest things in the English language; it rises from a mortification unto death, into a magnificent burst of triumph in the Resurrection unto Life, which I think unequalled of its kind. Then, I awoke at dawn and went with Mary Magdalene to the Sepulchre."

The spiritual and scriptural prayers in the Liturgy of the Church of England were no forms to her, they were the voice of her heart, and she frequently used the collects in praying. She had evidently written on this subject to Caroline Maitland, who replied, "For your sake I read the Ascension Day Collect over again, and marked it in my prayer-book. I like you for putting your *life* into forms for me."

In June, 1847, she wrote to her again : "Old Dr. Chalmers is gone ! He was found sitting up in his bed, strong even in death, no sign of any struggle on his calm face. What a great and good spirit has vanished from the earth. I am glad you and I pleased him by helping to feed his poor Highlanders. How happy the Angels, and the Redeemer must be to have him in Heaven.

"The book club has got for me the 2nd Volume of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, and it is the delight of my life."

This autumn Mr. Chalmers was asked to undertake the charge for three months of a small church at Dunoon on the

Clyde, built for the English visitors, by a wealthy and benevolent Mr. Burnley. Mr. Chalmers promised to undertake the first half of the time, and Dr. Marsh took the second. During the later time Esther and Caroline Maitland came to be near their friends. On her journey home Catherine Marsh wrote to Caroline Maitland from York :

“Sept. 29th, 1847.—Well, Dunoon is over, and how wonderfully pleasant you made it to me. After you were gone I grew nearer to being discontented than I ever remember feeling before. Then it rained all day and all night.

“When we left, the greater part of the congregation were on the pier to see us off. Mrs. Burnley brought her children, Captain Ireland cracked his last kind little joke, beside Mr. Stow, author of *The Training System*, with his handsome young son, beautifully trained into the Church of England !

“To-night, on the way from the Station to the Hotel, I talked to a poor orphan boy, and gave him some books, and taught him a prayer (and I gave him a little money), he was so grateful. Now, it is to-morrow, and I have taken him to a shop and have bought a bound Bible for him, and while I wrote texts and prayers in it, the Quaker shopman blessed me, and gave me a book called *The Way of Peace*, passages from various writers, collected by himself. So I blessed him and said, ‘Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.’ The Minster is noble, it is Art’s mountain scenery. As we journeyed homewards, I gave myself afresh to God, longing to glorify Him, my Master, my gentle, kind, gracious Master—to be, to do, or to suffer—(but the last as little as He can let me do with). ‘Let Thy gentleness make me great.’”

Towards the end of this year Catherine Marsh had, for the second time, to face the trial of giving up her place as the constant companion of her father; and again her love for him triumphed over, and put out of sight, her own feelings.

Long years after her Father’s third marriage, she wrote :
“No heart could feel as mine did, when I had to give him

up to *the third*, though thank God, he never knew it. But when I was able to look upon it calmly, I felt that, just as his second marriage was the consequence of the deep, holy, happy love of the first—so the third was the result of the calm joy he had found in the sweet and helpful fellowship of the second. I believe no one could have more rejoiced in the blessing that his second wife proved to him and his children, than my own sweet noble-hearted mother would. Without those three years of growing love with our first stepmother I should have been the poorer for all Eternity.”

Early in 1848 Dr. Marsh's marriage with the Hon. Louisa Horatia Powys, seventh daughter of Lord Lilford, took place at Clifton, the home of Miss Powys.

During her father's absence Katie spent part of the time with Francis and Mary Trench, and the remainder at Park Place. After she left, Caroline Maitland wrote :

“ It was good to have you, and very pleasant. If you lived here I should be a better and happier woman. You give me great desires after your ‘ life of self-renouncing love ’—but my best desires go away, and leave untouched my life of self-indulgent love, but I will ask God for greater grace. I have thought of the words in *The White Robes*.¹ It would be more honest to give up the *name* of Christian, seeing I have lost *the thing*. By *the thing*, I mean the *consciousness* of Christian life. The real thing is, I know, independent of ourselves and done for us, and we cannot lose it.

“ How sorry I am for you—but when you see your father happy, and you are sure to be kind to her, I think you will be happy again. It would be nearly happiness enough, to have made so many happy as you have done.”

Katie replied :

“ I loved your kindest letter. Now, you may thank God for me. Matilda had bought lovely flowers for my new rooms (in the re-arrangement of the house), and the sunshine was streaming in, so I knelt down to pray that

¹ The title of an essay by Dr. Hamilton which Catherine Marsh had given her.

my Saviour's Presence may hallow these rooms—that will be happiness. I was reading to-day in my little old sacramental book, this thought, 'Jesus, in His sorrow considered and provided for your comfort—by His Institution of the Lord's Supper.' There was something so calmly self-forgetting, when He knew the hours of bodily torture, and spiritual desertion, were at hand, and when the coming agony in the Garden of Gethsemane was already casting its shadow upon His Brow—that He should be planning a dying remembrance to link our souls to His, until His coming again to complete our redemption. Think about His thoughtful kindness, just before you next take the Lord's Supper.

“Read again in *The White Robes*, the end of the man, who in his doubtful fight, almost thought he had better give up—‘but a sword was in his hand when he fell—and a palm of victory is in it now. My precious Father came often to my sitting-room to-day, and Mrs. Marsh was very kind in the evening. Oh, life is very full of blessed interest whilst we can speak to perishing sinners of a living Saviour. It makes even my widowed heart sing for joy.’”

There was much in public life to occupy her thoughts in this year of Revolutions, when throughout Europe thrones were tottering. The second republic was rising in France under Louis Napoleon, while Louis Philippe fled for safety to England. The insurrection in Poland, the armed rebellion of Kossuth in Hungary, the flight of the Emperor of Austria, and many such historical events were taking place with startling rapidity. She was a patriot to her heart's core, and the dangers that threatened England filled her mind with dread. She had evidently written on the subject to Frederick Chalmers, and he replied :

“*Leamington, March 28th.*—Many thanks for your interesting letter on such a variety of stirring topics. The daily events are thrilling. Fergus O'Connor and his Chartists have immense funds, and employ trained men to go about the country, to teach the working classes their own views of property. What is needed is more stringent legislation for the punishment and prevention

of drunkenness and crime. With all the ruffian outrages to which the rights of labour have given rise, I hear no voice raised for women and children. It would be considered cruel and unconstitutional to put down a strike of colliers, (men, receiving in wages, perhaps, far better salaries than the working clergy)—but such real objects of compassion and sympathy as the poor shirt makers, are left to hopeless penury. One mark of the infidel and satanic origin of this revolutionary movement is that, (as you will see,) they all tend to the degradation of women. Republicanism and politeness do not well agree, but socialism and infidelity sink woman to a slave.”

After her father's marriage she was more often free to visit her relations and friends. The next letter was written to Caroline Maitland while she was staying with her cousins Charlotte and Emma Leycester in their home in London.

“19, *Wilton Crescent*.—Since I came here I have heard a letter read from Louis Napoleon's physician. He wrote : ‘There is undoubtedly a combination on foot between France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, to force England to surrender their respective refugees—Queen of France and family included. This England will never bear. Therefore I cannot see how three months can elapse without a war.’ The Duke and Lord Hardinge meet daily, and are very uneasy. The Duke told Lord Hardinge we were utterly unprepared for war, which under our altered circumstances would necessarily be invasion—and that we wanted three years' preparation for that which might take place in three weeks. We have only 31,000 men at command—France 490,000, and 140,000 could be landed on our shores in 10 days, perhaps without even encountering our fleet. The Duke has been to Sheerness and taken up the buoys (police work) that the French Fleet might be stranded *there* at all events. I heard this from Mr. John Campbell Colquhoun, when he came to dine at the Leycesters. If only we keep close to our God, and exalt His truth, we need fear none of these things; but that these are solemn times, and that our ‘boldest hold their breath’ none but fools or knaves can deny. Read the

abridged translation of Baron Maurice in *The Times* of the 23rd. He over-rates the number of our soldiers, and yet how frightful are his deductions. How could our Fleet stop three Fleets, unless by the same Hand which overwhelmed the Spanish Armada. *Therefore let us pray.*"

A little later she wrote to her again: "I love you all the better for taking a strong and prayerful interest about our country's dangers, and for caring for all the brave soldiers who may soon be shedding their life-blood for us. God in His mercy avert war. I feel no conquests would be worth the lives of these gallant unboastful British men. I have been talking with some of them lately, and my heart yearned over them, and I said that they must be converted now, or I should die of anxiety about them when fighting begins. I will send you a *Times* article in a day or two. Very alarming is the tone of the newspapers to-day, with smothered fears about Ireland. It is also said that 200,000 Chartists are expected in London this day week."

That day week, April 10, was memorable in London. "The Chartists had arranged a demonstration to be held on Kennington Common, previous to presenting a second petition for reform, which purported to bear 6,000,000 signatures. The gathering was forbidden, and as riots were feared the Duke of Wellington was put in command of the forces, and 200,000 special constables were sworn in."¹

The sequel, and a secret concerning it, was told in the following words by the late beloved and honoured Earl of Shaftesbury, at a meeting for the London City Mission. "At the time when we were threatened by Revolution in 1848, I remember that Sir George Grey, Secretary of State for the Home Department, some time before the day on which the Chartist Movement was to display its power, sent for me and said: 'Can anything be done to soothe and instruct the people? Can any one go among them and speak to them of the importance of order and quiet?' I thought much might be done in this direction, and I told him of one agency among many that might be useful—and that was the London City Mission. For some weeks our

¹ Quoted from *A Dictionary of Dates*. Nelson & Son.

City Missionaries went out on an extraordinary errand, and spoke to the people of the vital necessity of maintaining order, and they were well received. You know how the day so much dreaded passed over, and how all was tranquil, not the breath of a threat was uttered and why? Because God's blessing was on the work of our City Missionaries. Sir George Grey wrote to me stating that as Minister of the Home Department, and as responsible for the peace of this great City, 'I do not hesitate to tell you,' he said, 'that the agents of the London City Mission were instrumental in keeping us from danger, and in enabling us to pass through the day with security and satisfaction.' "

Another trial was in store for Catherine Marsh, the separation from her sister Matilda; for Frederick Chalmers had been appointed to the living of South Malling in Sussex. When they were leaving Leamington her father gave Matilda a ring on which was engraved "St. Matthew xviii. 19," and they agreed to pray that before long they might have one home again.

Soon after the parting, her father took Katie to stay with Matilda, in her new home. Notwithstanding the brave way in which she met the trial of the separation from her sister, the letter to Caroline Maitland which follows next, written just after this first visit was ended, shows how deeply she felt it.

"*Gatton Park, Reigate, July 13th, 1849.*—I have left Matilda—and when I get home, I shall bear all my anxieties without her—without the calming of her voice each night in prayer—but when next we share one home, our lips shall utter praise. Still thanks be to God, it is not death that separates us.

"Lady Warwick asked me to come here on my way home. I like this strong, motherly Lady Warwick of all things—with her bright eyes, in her suffering face. There are others here, strangers to me, except Catherine Lindsay, but all are kind and pleasant. One of them talked with me for two hours, telling me that she balanced between Romanism and Infidelity—it made me shudder to see the

suppressed misery behind all the wit and vigour that lived in her powerful eyes. At last I said, 'Now I must pray with you.' She refused, but I knelt and took her hand, and she knelt too, and laid her head on my shoulder. Oh, that she may be taught and comforted of God."

Keenly as she felt her trials, Catherine Marsh had also the happy art of looking on the bright side. It is seen in this letter to Caroline Maitland, dated *August 1st*, 1849.

Midnight.—"It is good to hear of your having pleasant things, and I have had them too. The 25 old women at my cottage reading blessing me, and bidding me not 'die of cholera in the country beyond seas' (Scotland!). Then, there were tender looks in bright young eyes, when I was talking to the girl candidates for Confirmation. Then, I love to see my father enjoying my stories—it shortens the cry in my heart, when alone in my own room. My mercies are great, but I feel a very lone woman—only 'the time is short,' and it is a great thing to have an aim in life, beyond momentary self-happiness, an interest in others is a rich mercy. Deadly tired, and cannot think another thought, except to tell you that a tailor, entirely out of kindness! has cut for me the newest pattern of a jacket, which I send on to you, it is perfect."

While she was in Scotland, after ending her visit to Belmont, she wrote to Mrs. Mackenzie :

"*Kennet, Alloa*.—I have deeply enjoyed being amongst you all, and feel it one of my *accountabilities*. Tell Lord Mackenzie I am arranging in my mind *relics* of his interesting conversation, to tell my father.

"The views from this house are so pleasant, the fine expanse of the Forth, distant views of Stirling Castle, and the far-away blue mountains of Perthshire, and I rejoice to see my dearest Janie with her kind and devoted husband and her splendid Baby. She is just the same as ever, only if possible more delightful, and she is earnestly caring for the souls and bodies of all their people. We are soon going home. I can hardly breathe now till I see my father's face, and he writes that he 'is cutting notches in his stick to count the days till he sees me.'"

After her return home, when she was walking down a street in Leamington, she was met by a pretty little girl, who was selling matches, and the child asked her to buy a box, saying "Only a halfpenny." She took a box, and with a smile gave a shilling, and was just going to ask the child about herself, but before she could speak, "You must have twenty-four boxes for this," said the young saleswoman, as she began to count them. To the assurance that the shilling was for herself, she replied, "No, thank ye, I am selling, not begging!" The difficulty of carrying twenty-four match-boxes while visiting her friends, which was suggested as an escape from the purchase, was speedily set aside by the ready answer, "Just tell me your house, and I'll leave them there for ye." So this offer was accepted, with the condition "First tell me *your* house." Then they parted; but in those few minutes a friendship began full of blessings for that honest child, blessings not for time only, but for Eternity. On visiting her, the house was found to be a common lodging-house, in which she had been left by her parents. They had come over from Ireland for the haymaking, and the season not having been a prosperous one for them, they had only sufficient money to pay the return fare for two; so Anne was left behind, with a stock of matches, by the sale of which she was to support herself! The landlady had been kind, but it was not a fit place for the girl to remain in, so Catherine Marsh arranged that she should be transferred to the care of a good motherly woman, while plans for her future were considered. Anne C.'s devotion to her newly found friend was great. She now felt no wish to return to Ireland, so of her own accord wrote and sent off the following letter, which she first showed to her landlady: "Dear Mother, You need not be troubling about me any more, for I have found a she, who's a mother to me." The long and happy sequel is told in few words. Catherine Marsh succeeded in getting Anne C. into an excellent school at Coventry, in which girls were trained for domestic service. After four years there, she came to Beckenham Rectory as under-housemaid; here she rose from one step to another in different departments

of service—until she became cook-housekeeper. She proved herself to be not only a clever and faithful servant, but also an attached and grateful friend to all the family. Probably the first place in her warm Irish heart was kept for her first friend, though Mrs. Chalmers, in whose household she lived, must have been almost equally beloved. Anne C. lived to a good old age, and died in great peace firmly trusting for salvation in the Lord Jesus alone.

The dreaded age of thirty, which in those years was supposed to usher in middle age, was past for Catherine Marsh, and approaching for Caroline Maitland; when this letter was written to her in *February*, 1850: "We are alike in our weaknesses. I was quite wretched when my thirtieth birthday came, but I was better after it! I liked the thought of our Saviour beginning His Ministry at thirty, and I began my first cottage-reading that night. Could not you begin one? They are to me an unfailing interest."

Her cottage reading once a week in King Street, was for about twenty-five women, chiefly elderly; not a very startling interest to ordinary thoughts—but she threw into it the energy of her love for the Saviour, and for souls; and through the warmth of her personal sympathy, each one became her friend.

Caroline Maitland's mind was cast in a different mould, so she could not receive the consolation proposed, but wrote in answer, "I have still got a month to strengthen my mind against the coming of *Age*. I defy an Angel to like to be thirty. I *won't* begin a Bible Class, I should not know what to say. It is all very well for you who were born an orator. I never go to my school-children without every idea I ever had, turned to blank at the sight of their blank faces!"

Time did not lessen the trial of her altered home-life to Catherine Marsh. When she was again staying with her sister at South Malling, she wrote to Caroline Maitland: "All the way from Leamington here I was very sad, feeling like a wanderer on the face of the earth. But in the last bit of the journey a woman in mourning was opposite me,

and I lifted up my heart to be enabled to speak a word of sympathy to her, and in helping to comfort her, I was comforted, and began to sing in my heart, 'While here, to do His Will be mine, And His to fix my time of rest.' The day before I left home we had a tea-party for the Sunday School children. In my haste while handing cake, by accident I put my finger into a boy's mug of tea. 'There, I said, 'that will sweeten it.' Whereupon five gallant spirits wanted to have their tea *sweetened* too !''

She heartily appreciated intellectual pleasures whenever she felt she might rightly allow herself time to enjoy them, and for help in this she turned often to Caroline Maitland, who told her of, or lent her, books on various subjects, and gave her suggestions for thought; she refers to this in the next letter to this friend.

"*December 28th, 1850.*—Thank you, thank you, my Cary. If you could know the delicious enjoyment the education you give me is, after my day of hard work, and the refreshment your books are to me, you would be rather glad of your work of mercy. Now that Mrs. Sherer has gone to Cambridge to live with her brother the Master of Jesus College, her son Henry no longer comes here for his holidays, so I have no literary food prepared for me excepting in your letters, and in *The Times*; a few books chiefly theological are all I can find for myself. But two months ago I bought Tennyson's poems! And ever since I have thought that its price might have bought nine pocket Bibles, or eighteen family dinners! Mary is giving me *In Memoriam*, I only know bits of it peeped into in booksellers' shops.

"I want you to pray on Old Year's night, 'the idols utterly abolish;' that 'looking up to a human mind' which you write of, is only an intellectual Romanism or hero-(instead of saint-) worship. We had better look up straight to the Source of Light, while we trace with thankfulness its beautiful reflections on the streams which water our hearts and minds. Oh, Cary, I am not a better woman than you, not half so good, for I have helpful Sundays, and an influence for good in my blessed father

ever nigh me ; and yet I look back on this year 1850, and only see dimness and darkness of mind. But, blessed be God, one thing is all light to me, the utter impossibility of my doing without the Lord Jesus Christ, and the utter impossibility in His Covenant faithfulness of His doing without me—this little grain of life in His great Universe. The pause in Time on the verge of the old year, to look down the dark gulf of the New, is the moment I prize the most, excepting those spent in the solemn presence of death. Pray for Matilda's little dancing, shouting May, just eighteen months old—who now is lying in her cradle, almost dying."

[*The reply.*]

"*January 1st, 1851.*—Your fine, big letter was a real pleasure to me on this cold strange New Year's Day of wind and rain, and sorrow for the old year lying dead. I like my graven images (as you call them) and will not have one of them 'utterly abolished,' how could you think of such a thing? But indeed I am trying to walk less by *moon*-light, and more by *Sun*-light, and then, I *may* look up to my moons, because in the nature of things I cannot see them at all without looking up, for they are above us, though not so high as the sun, and only shining in his light. I want to know that little shouting May is going to live."

The next letter gives the answer : " Oh, my Cary, I left home at an hour's notice to come here to see lovely little May die—so patiently, so quietly. Her deep-hearted gentle mother, even in her great sorrow, never doubts that 'God is love.' She thinks of her little Darling with her lark-like spirit, and joyful voice, singing in the choir of Paradise, 'Worthy is the Lamb.' Our precious Father came to comfort Matilda with the tenderness of his sympathy."

A few days later sorrow came to Caroline Maitland in the death of her eldest brother's wife, and Katie wrote : " Much have I grieved for you in the breaking of this strong tie of affection. I should like to be with you to try to say words of help, if such were given me—for I daily

learn my own are weak, and helpless. Cary, Tennyson would have been great to me if he had never written another word beyond

‘I hold it true, whate’er befall,
I feel it when I sorrow most
’Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all.’

No man could have written that from the depths of a true heart, without a life rich with healthfully sorrowful experience. He had earned it by many struggles. How chastened! After the galloping and blustering away of emotion in Locksley Hall (which still I like!). I wish I could be doubly more to you now than in my best days. ‘Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty,’ is one of the best of promises to me. When? *Soon*, prays my spirit. Your own Katie.”

Shortly after the death of little May, Frederick Chalmers was offered the living of Beckenham in Kent, thus the prayed for *one home again* became possible. He wrote to Dr. Marsh to say that if he would share the home with them, it would make him “the happiest son, and Matilda the happiest daughter, in England.”

Outside a packet of letters, Dr. Marsh has written as follows: “Letters (love-letters) from my blessed children and grandchildren. No man was ever more blessed! And then, to have the privilege of living under Frederick’s roof with darling Matilda and Katie. Thanks, thanks, be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

C.M. to C.F.M.:

“Cary, I don’t think we shall live in Leamington much longer, and I dread leaving my old women of my cottage-reading, my hospital, my girls whom I have nourished and brought up in different walks of life, my school-children and so on. It will be hard to leave my sick people, if they don’t die, my classes and all my interests, but such a blessing to live with Matilda and Frederick, and to have my father with them again.”

Whenever Louie was away from her mother-aunt, they

wrote to each other every week or oftener, letters which kept open communication between their hearts. Louie quite understood the divided feelings which the change in prospect brought with it, and she wrote her sympathy. Her letter ended thus : " But perhaps there is wanted at Beckenham some one who will labour as lovingly and earnestly among the people there, as you have done among those at Leamington, so God wants you there, and is sending for you in this way, but it will be a great trial to you, my Auntie."

The child was right in what she foresaw, yet neither Catherine Marsh herself, nor any of her family or friends could have imagined what the call of God was to be to her, through the deep and wide interests which He was about to give her, in this new home. Hitherto He had been preparing her by the varied ways through which He had led her, to keep her heart and her life free for the special work for which He had gifted her. She had followed His leading, thus she was ready for His call.

Her letter to Mrs. Mackenzie closes this chapter in her life. " Lansdowne House. My last day in this deserted house. My farewells to the dear poor people are over. Thank God we have a man of prayer and faith and love, and his wife is equally *desirable*, coming to take charge of them."

BECKENHAM

PART I

THE CALL AND HER RESPONSE

1850—1853

“Once in a century springs forth a deed
From the dark bands of forgetfulness freed,
Destined to shine, and to bless and to lead.”

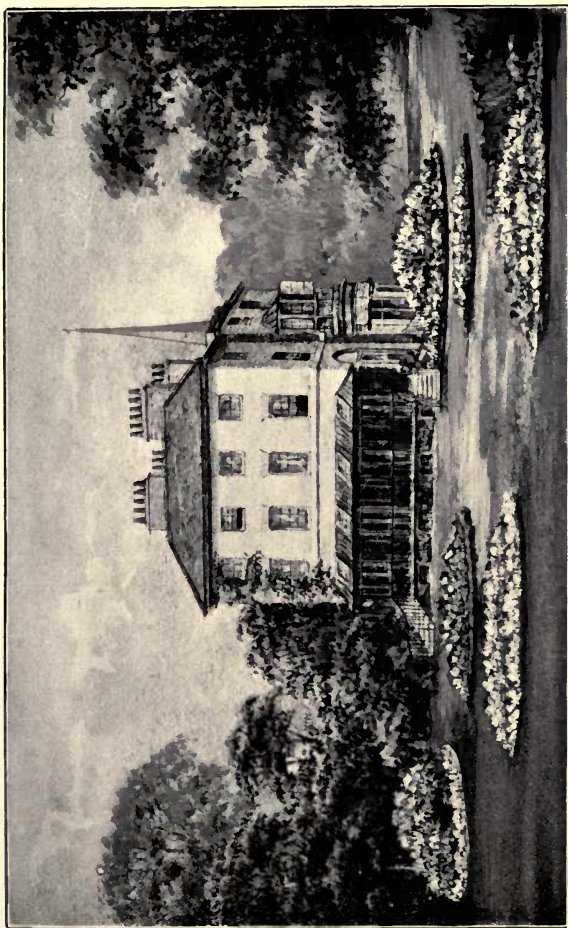
DEAN ALFORD.

BECKENHAM at that time was a typical English village, “a group of cottages, farms, and country houses, representing different degrees of social rank or worldly prosperity.”¹

The Rectory grounds are only separated from the churchyard by the high road that passes through the village; and the Church with its tapering spire, the old lych gate, and the sombre avenue of yew trees, made a picturesque corner just opposite the Rectory gate. A short drive through a shrubbery led to the Rectory, with its pillared porch facing a spacious lawn, bounded by a group of Scotch fir trees, while on the other side of the house there was a lovely flower garden.

After leaving Leamington, Catherine Marsh went to Beckenham to help her sister in arranging the new home. She had great taste in doing this and enjoyed it. She was delighted with her boudoir, with its window opening on a rounded balcony above the flower garden. The room had a light green paper, the doors and a deep recess which held a tall book-case, were draped with dark red velvet, while plenty of books, pictures and pretty things, the gifts of love, gave a charm to it. Near the window there was

¹ *Beckenham, Past and Present*, by Robert Borrowman.



BECKENHAM RECTORY, KENT.

a davenport writing-desk where later on she was to write the books that stirred thousands of hearts. It was in that room also that not a few made their decision for Christ, and that many others renewed their allegiance to Him, and gave themselves afresh to His service; and in that room numbers of strangers sought her acquaintance, her counsel and her friendship.

Yet, when she went first to Beckenham, though glad at heart in the one home again, she naturally shrank from the idea of living in a village, after the stirring life of Birmingham, and the variety of interests in Leamington. Beckenham was really a village in those days, and moreover there was a good supply of district visitors, Sunday school teachers and other helpers already at work in the parish, so she feared there would be little or nothing left for her to do. But there was a small hamlet, Elmers End, which had no visitor of its own. She gladly took this lowly work, began to make friends with the few inhabitants, and an old Mrs. Muggeridge soon made her welcome to the use of her parlour for a cottage reading one afternoon in the week.

Dr. and Mrs. Marsh came to their new home on July 19th, 1851, that his seventy-fifth birthday, the 20th, might be kept there with the children and grandchildren who were longing for his coming.

Catherine Marsh had much more time for correspondence and reading now, and she also felt more free to visit her friends. She had a great power of enjoyment. There was nothing gloomy or ascetic about her, and a rare unself-consciousness, a perfectly natural manner, and a keen sense of humour, added to her many attractions.

The one home again had quite restored her cheerfulness, as the following letter to Caroline Maitland will show :

“Such a pleasant Sunday, darling father full of holy and beautiful thoughts making ‘that Sabbath day a high day.’ One of the maids was ill—poor old rather cross Jane, so I read to her in the evening, some of my mother’s letters to us, from our little memorials of her. When I read this

passage, 'I hope it may please God to restore my health, that we may spend a few more years together in love and peace,' I laid down my book and cried, and old hard Jane wiped away a tear. It is pleasant to think that if you died when your child was a child—nineteen years after she would cry for you as heartily as ever. If I died to-morrow, Louie would cry for me nineteen years hence, I know it. Love is a glorious thing. I like sitting alone, and shouting up my thanks to God for the lots of it He rains down into hearts for me—especially Louie's, Matilda's and my father's. My mother's letters do me good to my heart's core, and yet make me sad with shame that I am not a better child of hers yet. May I get even within a hundred degrees of her place in glory. I once troubled myself bitterly that I should not be able even to see her in heaven—she would be so very high up, and I so low. And this text comforted me, 'The fir tree, the pine tree, and the box tree together to beautify the place of my sanctuary.' She the stately pine, and I the little box—I like to take it for the box edging the flower-beds!"

Her unflagging interest in public affairs, in books, in pictures, and in travelling, prevented narrowness of thought; while her genuine sympathy and power of entering into the feelings of others, enabled her to have true friendship even with some from whose faith or practice she differed on many points. She did not conceal from them that she differed, but she prayed often for them, and for herself that she might be made wise when she sought to win them to follow, what she believed was, the best and safest way of Christian faith and life.

It was not long before she became known and loved at Beckenham. Men, women and children delighted in her company, and to each she was able to give the response they wished for. A good description of her life at this time may be given in these four lines :

"I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate;
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait."

While she carried on the desultory work, she prayed that she might have again some of her former interests, especially hospital visiting. To Caroline Maitland she told how her prayer was answered.

“While I was staying with Charlotte and Emma Leycester in London I heard lots of stirring things. If I were homeless I would live in London and be clever and do good like they do. My mind vibrated between all the dentists I heard of, till at the last moment Aunt Dukinfield advised me to go to the Queen’s dentist, Mr. Saunders. I drove to his door, and while he was hammering away in my mouth, we got into talking of operations and hospitals. I told him I knew a good deal about them, having visited regularly in one hospital for eleven years in Warwickshire, but I had not found one in Kent. He said, ‘Why not visit one in London?’ and I said—like the answer in the Catechism, ‘That is my desire’—but I did not tell him that I have been praying for six months for a call again into my old work. He said, ‘There is St. Thomas’s close to London Bridge, your station.’ ‘That is the one I have wished to get into.’ ‘I am lecturer there and can mention it to the chaplain. I am sure you will be thankfully admitted.’ Cary, it was as if God had said to me in so many words—‘I have opened that door for you, that is the reason you were made to come to this door.’ I sang (melodiously) as I drove home, a doxology to a struggle between two tunes, *neither fitting!*”

In the beginning of 1852 a great danger threatened England, and Catherine Marsh wrote to a friend in Scotland: “Are you coming to England to fight for and defend us in case of a French invasion? I mean to stay to help in looking after the wounded. The Duke of Wellington has begged for 30,000 more regular troops, and has been refused. Neither he nor Lord Anglesey, nor any officer I have seen of late, seem *comfortable*. They all see the possibility of attempted invasion, while such an adventurer as Louis Napoleon acts irresponsibly for France and wants employment and forage for at least a portion of his army. It is said our Navy is not well manned, though we have

enough ships. Yet, if we were determined to honour God in all our national matters, we should have no need to fear if all the world rose up against us.

"I have such a hope that the time is short that I long to entreat every one to be ready for our Lord Jesus Christ's return. He is coming for '*all* them that love His appearing' (I cannot doubt I do *that*), for all them 'that fear His Name, both small and great.' It is a comfort that He put the small first, not to keep them in suspense as to whether their small faith was enough. But O for more faith, we shall need it in coming days."

The thought of Christ's promised return was already influencing her life.

During her last year at Leamington she had been much interested in a beautiful girl named Annie Oram, brought there by her mother to enjoy the gaieties of the winter season. But she found time to come to Catherine Marsh's working party, and sometimes sought counsel from her, and this winter, when she was threatened with consumption, in great anxiety of soul she wrote to her for help, and received it as follows :

"Doubt not, but earnestly believe, that 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' I know you do not wish to refuse His offer of His great salvation. Then, *it is yours*. He has led you to desire to love Him, and no soul could ever perish with one spark of love in it to Him."

Afterwards she went to stay with the invalid at St. Leonards, and on returning home wrote to her :

"I laid your letter before the Lord, asking Him to teach you. Your lack of earnest interest in the Bible and in prayer, comes from your state of health. Do not fix your attention long on anything, but vary your employments. When you feel you cannot pray, remember Jesus Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us, say to Him 'plead for me,' and what prayer can avail like His? Look at the fulness of His atonement. What, shall the Son of God suffer and die, and one child of man who desires salvation by His death lose it? As soon could the justice of God become injustice, His wisdom error, His Holiness

break its own moral law. Believe in His love, and *then* desire holiness as much as you like. The more happy you are in His love the more holy you will be."

Her advice was followed, and soon she was able to write: "How good God is to me! Annie's happiness has made me so happy."

A little before her peaceful departure, Catherine Marsh wrote to her: "There is a thought about our Lord often in my mind—it is of His going back to Heaven to *prepare* a place for us; like a tender mother would for a long absent child, or the expectant bridegroom would for his chosen bride. And this wonderful love is as much for *you*, as if *you were the whole church of God*. Infinite love, like infinite creative power, is *infinite* to the individual as much as to the aggregate. Nothing stands between any human soul and the possession of it, but the *not* asking. 'If thou wouldst have asked, He would have given,' said the Giver Himself, who was waiting to bestow it."

In the spring of this year Catherine Marsh went to Cambridge to pay a visit to her old friend, Mrs. Sherer, who was now very lonely, for she had lost both her daughters. While she was there she wrote to Matilda:

"My life here is quietly dissipated and pleasant, but not workaday enough to satisfy me for any length of time. Life is too short for more than a week without work, but all here are very kind to me, and I am glad I came."

A visit to the Sherers had for her an interest of its own. She felt that her mind was greatly refreshed by converse with the mind of Henry Sherer, and there was no mistaking his delight in her society. In their characters there was a marked similarity, and in not a few of their tastes also. But deep in the heart of each was the knowledge that a barrier separated them which could only be broken down by a Divine Hand; and the time had not yet come.

Her life at Beckenham was apparently fully occupied now that hospital visiting and other interests in London were added to it. Yet she still continued to pray that

God would show her any other service for Him that He would allow her to undertake. He was going to entrust her with a spiritual mission to thousands of working men, navvies, soldiers, sailors and others, but before this He taught her to concentrate prayer, faith, and effort on winning, and then nurturing for Christ, one individual soul.

On May 7th, 1852, Dr. Marsh had a letter telling him that Mr. Reeve, a doctor, in the last stage of consumption, had just gone into lodgings at Beckenham with his wife and two little children, that he had refused to see any clergyman, and it was thought he had only a few days to live. He passed on the letter to his daughter. This was on Saturday night. She prayed earnestly that God would give her access to the dying man, and send a message of peace to his soul. After the morning service in church, she went to his lodging, but the anxious wife had to refuse to allow her to see her husband, for she had been warned that any excitement, like seeing a stranger, might shorten his life to a few hours.

Disappointed but not discouraged she went home, wrote a letter to Mr. Reeve and sent it with a bunch of flowers.

That night he had intended to end his suffering life with poison, but through the message from God in that letter, he was withheld from his dreadful purpose. Thenceforward the care of his soul in her daily visits occupied much of her time and thoughts, but never to the exclusion of the other sick people whom she had been visiting previously.¹

August, the usual time for her visits in Scotland, came and went, and still she remained at home, unwilling to leave the invalid who depended so much upon her. Under the continued strain of this deep interest, she began to suffer from such severe headaches, that Mr. Reeve, through his medical knowledge, recognised that it was necessary she should have a complete rest with change of scene.

¹ The experience through which he afterwards passed was told by her in her first book, *The Victory Won*, published about a year after his death by Nisbet & Co., London.

In September he made an unexpected rally, and he urged that she should no longer delay her going to Scotland.

In her diary she wrote : "Mr. Reeve had an earnest wish that my Father would administer the Sacrament to him before I left home. My Father saw him alone for ten minutes before the service and was delighted with his faith and deep humility. In the evening I went for my last visit, and I believe God will grant me to minister to him in his dying days."

During her absence she often wrote to and heard from him, and his wife also sent her cheering accounts showing that the Lord's work was prospering in his soul; and he lived for some months longer.

She went first to Huntly Lodge and while she was there Esther and Caroline Maitland came also. This was very beneficial for her, for Caroline Maitland's letters clearly show what an entertaining and sympathetic companion she must have been, and the good result is seen in the pleasant playfulness of Catherine Marsh's letter to her.

"After you left I was melancholy. At eventide I lay on a sofa and fell asleep while Miss Sandilands played, waking up at the end of each piece to say 'Thank you.' At last however the Duchess said, 'Is not that pretty?' and no answer came! Next day we read Haldane's commentaries on Romans x., and I slept again—the Duchess being on the other side of a screen. At last she looked round, laughed her clear light laugh, and said 'This is a dry part of the book!' We had a rather merry dinner considering, she laughed till she cried about some phases of boy nature in our schools, particularly about one boy bringing his teacher, Adèle Galton, a tea-cup full of his hair as a parting present; if giving one lock were a mark of friendship, a tea-cup full he thought, was boundless love. The gallant Major who dines here to-day is 92! and his sons, there are three coming, vary between 60 and 70 years of age, and one is deaf and dumb! Dear little Annie Sandilands and I toddled amongst the cottages together to-day. I was tired first, for she had her pony to ride home, so she actually proposed that I should make up for it by

going to sleep *again* while *Haldane on the Romans* was being read, and she shook her head whenever I opened my eyes ! The pretty Georgina Calcraft¹ and my Louie are great friends. Georgy slips her hand into mine after evening prayers and runs into my room for a nightly chat. She is a good and pious and very bright child. Your virtues and dear Esther's are welcome topics here. Our day of being *heroes* will come *when we are gone*."

The dawn of 1853 ushered in the most eventful year of Catherine Marsh's life. No sign foretold it, yet her "heart was like a prophet to her heart," and led her to pray for that which would come to pass. She usually spent the last hours of the year in writing out subjects for prayer during the coming year, and at the side of each page left a broad margin on which at the end of the year she wrote the answers that had been given her. Among the petitions for 1853 was this one :

"Bless my intercourse with Mr. Reeve even more than at the beginning, for which I will ever bless Thee. What a gift was that soul to my prayers this year. May I be with him at the last and may his dying bed be a pulpit on which he shall preach Christ to the winning of several souls. Give me many such interests and joys this year." On the margin beside this she has written, "Marvellously answered."

Another petition : "That I may have increasing opportunities of speaking to multitudes of souls for Thee, and in increasing power of the Holy Spirit, so that I may see numbers added to the Lord of such as shall be wholly on His side." On the margin of this prayer she wrote, "Cannot deny it, by the free Grace of God." Her other petitions were many, for her relations and friends, and for each by name.

In the next letter she tells Caroline Maitland how the answer was given to the first of these prayers :

"*Beckenham, March 4th, 1853.*—The soul God told me

¹ Daughter of Mr. and Lady Caroline Calcraft, and afterwards the wife of Mr. Dudley Ryder of Westbrook Hay.

to nurse for Him, He has re-called Home. Yesterday at the ninth hour (Life's) fever left him, and I knew that at the same hour the Lord Jesus said, 'Go thy way, he liveth.' On Monday night he said to me, 'My peace is full now, Christ is dwelling in my heart.' Yesterday morning I was summoned to him. Not a moment was lost, but his last sigh was breathed before I entered his room. I fancied (but it must have been fancy) that the hand grasped mine. His eyes were still open, I looked into their well of peace, lighted up by a lingering ray of the spirit which was then with God—it shone with the expression of the words he told me to say beside him after his death, 'Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The prayer he loved best was 'Fill me with the Holy Spirit.' A month ago he asked me to print on large cards, to be hung on the posts of his bed, these words, 'The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost;' and 'I only want now a farther revelation of the beauty of the unseen Son of God.' To-day I put into his hand, in his coffin, 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.' It was the hand that used to hold my daily letters¹ to him about some passage of Scripture. I miss writing it the last thing at night when I have finished my prayer. He will not go to Heaven alone, he has taken his loving wife's heart and his little children's with him."

The appointed work was finished, and she had faithfully carried out the charge which God had given her for the individual soul.

At first she felt almost painfully the blank left in her daily life. She wrote to her father, "Words cannot express what it was to my soul. All the wrestling, rejoicing, fearing, hoping, believing, seeing, and then glorying in the Holy Spirit's finished work; I knew that He never had failed in any work He began, and never could. Now my cry is more, more, such souls for Christ Jesus."

While she waited on her Heavenly Master, saying "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" the answer

¹ These letters have been carefully preserved, first by his wife during her lifetime, and since by his daughters, Marian and Alice Reeve.

came in "a great door and effectual" being opened before her by Him.

The view from Beckenham Rectory across the green fields and hedgerows bounded by the Norwood hills, with here and there a group of cottages or a farmstead, while a light curl of smoke told of some sheltered home hidden amongst its trees, was a typical English scene, suggesting tranquil peace. Now a change was at hand. The great Exhibition which had disappeared from Hyde Park, was about to re-appear as the Crystal Palace on one of those hills in full view from the Rectory.

In the village there was a general lamentation at the prospect. "It will spoil the neighbourhood," "it will make it suburban," and such-like words were often heard. But Matilda Chalmers said, as she looked across at the bare space where the oaks and elms that crowned the hills had been cut down, "We must ask God to give us instead, *trees of righteousness* of His planting," words which were often recalled later on when that prayer had had its striking answer.

The story of this time was told by Catherine Marsh in her book *English Hearts and English Hands*. As it is out of print its opening pages are given here.

"Early in the year 1853, a large number of railway excavators, amounting at length to nearly three thousand, were gathered from different parts of the kingdom, to work at the ground of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. Many a pleasant meeting took place. Fathers and sons who had hardly expected to grasp each others' hands again met there; and brothers who had parted in boyhood, to follow their wandering course of life apart, found they were working side by side.

"Nearly two hundred of these men lodged in the village of Beckenham; so that, in visiting the cottages, we heard of them, but seldom met them, as they were generally employed till late in the evening. It was on Sunday, the 13th of March, that I first attempted to seek them out. About seven in the evening, I went to a cottage where several were lodging, and asked for one of the family—

whom I had formerly visited in his illness—as an easy introduction to the strangers. A tall, strong man, in a fustian jacket, opened the door scarcely wide enough to show his face. ‘Harry ain’t here just now.’

“ ‘But I suppose I shall see him if I wait, shall I not? I will walk in, if you will allow me.’

“ ‘Well, you can if you like; but we’re a lot of rough ‘uns.’

“ ‘Oh, thank you, I do not mind that; you will be very civil to me, I am sure. Would you get me a chair?’

“An intelligent-looking youth darted forward, dusted a chair with the tail of another man’s coat, and placed it for me near the table.

“I inquired if any of them had been at church; but not one had thought of it. They listened with attentive interest to an account of Mr. Chalmers’ morning sermon, on the occasion of the death of a medical man who had been residing in Beckenham, with a sketch of his history. Several of them expressed strong admiration of Dr. Reeve’s kindness and generosity to the poor, whilst himself working hard, mentally, for his own support; and the young man, whose name was Edward Perry, said, ‘I know that brain-labour is harder than hand-labour.’

“When the narrative was ended, he said, ‘Well, ma’am, it’s a beautiful story, but in a measure it passes by me, because I don’t believe the Bible.’

“I dreaded an argument, yet felt it necessary to reply, so prayed silently for wisdom; and then inquired the reason of his unbelief.

“ ‘Because I read in the Bible that God is a God of love, and yet that He has prepared from all eternity a place of torment for us poor, pitiful creatures.’

“ ‘In *my* Bible,’ I replied, ‘I have never read anything of the sort. I read that God is love; and that the Lord Jesus Christ will say, at the judgment day, to those who have believed and obeyed Him, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom *prepared for you* from the foundation of the world.” But to those who have rejected His salvation, and despised His laws, He will say, “Depart,

ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." If man chooses to reject God's offer of mercy through a Saviour, and to prepare himself for that place of punishment, he has no right to charge God with the result of his own sin and wilful madness.'

" 'Well,' he replied, 'I do see that is a different case from what I thought before. But now, look here. I am a poor fellow—don't pretend, nor profess; yet I have a quarrel with a mate—feel to hate him—will drub him well next time we light on one another. Think better of it . . . offer him half my bread and cheese, when we chance of meeting . . . and we're friends. Now! why can't God do a generous action like that, and forgive us outright?'

" 'Well, my friend, we must try and look at the case from both sides. Suppose a father of a well-trained family . . . very obedient to his orders . . . an ornament to the neighbourhood . . . a blessing to him and to each other. Suddenly he discovers one of them has fallen into disobedience to him, and is indulging in lying, swearing, or stealing. What is the father to do? His tender heart says, "I can't bear to inflict punishment on my son," his wise head says, "But if I do not, disorder, sin and misery will soon run riot in my family." The rest will say, "Father does not mind our disobeying him . . . he makes no difference between the good and the bad; there can't be much harm in sin then, after all. I also will follow my own inclinations, if nothing is to come of it."'

" 'Well, I see what you mean, and it is sense too. But how do you know that God has any other family besides men?'

" 'I know it from His Word. I read of "angels" and "hosts of heaven." And "that unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." But tell me, when you are at work beneath the dark blue midnight sky, and look up from your shovelful of earth to the thousand stars that are glittering there, most of them worlds much larger than this, do you think they are only hung there for lanterns? Do you not rather think that God, who wastes nothing in His

Creation, as we see more the deeper we look into it, has probably peopled many of them with beings as intelligent as man? And what if the news should be carried through God's creation, that a world had rebelled against Him, and that He had taken no notice of it . . . would not other worlds be liable to take the infection, and sin and its sister misery spread throughout God's beautiful universe . . . and blacken the whole? But He *has* taken notice of it. He has punished sin with death. "Death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And He threatens eternal death to unrepenting sinners. Yet, "GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH ON HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE." That Son of God became man; He was born into this world for one purpose. To bear the punishment due to our sins. To make an infinite sacrifice with infinite suffering . . . all for one purpose. *This* is that purpose, "THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST." He is drawing nigh . . . He is *come to you now*. He is speaking these words of His own, by my feeble lips. Are you willing to let Him save you?

" 'I am, I am,' he said, with fervour, drawing his chair nearer to me as he spoke, 'I never thought of Him before but as an angry God. . . . You make Him out a *Friend*.'

" 'And so will *you*, when you read His Word. But I want you to kneel down and join with me in praying that God would give you His Holy Spirit from this hour . . . that these better thoughts and feelings may not pass away. Shall I pray with you?'

" 'I should like it. But *this* man,' pointing to one behind him, 'never opens his mouth but to swear.'

" 'But he will open it to pray now. Will you not, my friend?'

" 'Yes.'

"And as we all knelt together, their voices followed mine, and two or three sobs burst from those strong men. As we rose up, I told them how much I should have liked to stay to read to them; but as it was growing late,

would they therefore read the Bible together when I had left ? ’

“ ‘ I will read to the rest,’ said Edward ; and took down the landlady’s Bible. I opened it on St. John iii. for him ; and lingered at the door to hear the full tones of his earnest voice, and to thank God, and take courage.

“ He sat up reading on, in that Gospel of St. John, till ten o’clock that night. I was told afterwards that when speaking of our conversation, he said, ‘ It was all true that she said to me. I felt it in my heart.’

“ We have never met again. I fear now that we never shall meet until the day when we shall hear those two sentences passed, the solemn words of which began our friendly discussion. He left, before the Bible which I sent him reached his lodging. Bitterly have I regretted, ever since, a few days’ delay in sending it. Every effort to trace him since has failed. But He who stood at the door of that honest heart then, and knocked, and said, ‘ If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him and he with me,’ will, I hope and believe, give him the victory that overcometh the world . . . even faith . . . and say to him, at the last, ‘ To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and have sat down with my Father on His throne.’

“ Encouraged by the cordial reception given to my friendly advances by these strangers, I felt anxious to meet them for the purpose of giving religious instruction on the Sabbath evenings, and twice in the week ; especially as I found on inquiry that few, if any of them, at that time, ever seemed to think of entering any place of worship. Some visits to cottages where they lodged brought several volunteers for these Bible classes ; and two rooms with an open doorway between them, were offered for the purpose. From that time Testaments were given to those who attended.

“ During the winter, the attendance of the navvies at church continued to be large and regular ; and the cottages, where ‘ readings ’ were given, were thronged.

"On the last day of 1853 the sergeant of the police, stationed at Beckenham, called to return thanks for the interest that had been taken in these noble fellows. He said that his duty had never been so easy before in Beckenham, for their example had restrained the wilder young men of the place, and had even shamed a few into attendance at public worship.

"So, we wrote at the close of our first year's intercourse with the navvies . . . 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.' " ¹

This autumn, instead of her usual visits in Scotland, Catherine Marsh took her adopted daughters to Ireland. Her letter to Miss Maitland describes the beginning of the journey, and extracts from her *Journal* tell the rest.

C.M. to C.F.M.:

"We spent a day at Toft en route, and William and Charlie Marshall joined us there. Our first destination was Bushey Park in County Wicklow, as the Carnwaths did not wish us to sleep under any roof in Ireland until after theirs had sheltered us. He and his dear wife have a higher and deeper interest than when we last met. I visited a good many of the cottages near, and after a pleasant visit, Lord Carnwath and William came with us to Dublin, put us into the train for Killarney, and Louie, Lucy and I with my good S—— were left to our own resources. No time to tell you of even half our adventures, but one of them is your due. In the boat on the lovely lake I talked with old Spillane (boatman and guide) and told him your beautiful story of young Frank Lambert, of his life of holy joy and active service for the Captain of his salvation, from the day when he believed that He had forgiven him all his sins, until his last blessed Sunday; and then, the accident to the boat by which he lost his life here, but began his happy life in Heaven, ten weeks ago; and Spillane listened feelingly. When we came back to the Hotel on the lakeside, we made acquaintance with a father and his two young sons, nice people, all rather sad-looking. They were leaving early the next

¹ 1 Sam. vii. 12.

morning. I gave the father the *Pastoral Addresses*, he looked at my father's name and asked me if I knew Mrs. Morgan or her brother Captain Beville. I said that Mrs. Morgan's youngest daughter was my brother's wife. He replied, 'They are old friends of mine, my name is Lambert.' They were Frank Lambert's father and his brothers Brooke and Allan! Just then the grand piper of the South of Ireland came in to sing and to play, so I could not say 'I know for whom you are in mourning,' but I wrote it to him with words of sympathy. I send you his answer, for you deserve to see it."

Journal.—"We had engaged Spillane to go with us to the Gap of Dunloe, and return by the three lakes; but just after breakfast half a dozen people came in, driven back by the hopelessness of the weather, and Spillane, in answer to our anxious question as to any hope of a change, replied, 'Sure there is, in September, but it's broken up anyhow now,' and he pointed to the windward, where it looked blacker than Indian Ink. After five minutes for despair we decided to leave that day. Our friendly guard gave us a carriage to ourselves, and we went to Monkstown where our old friends Mrs. Paske and Harriett were staying and had asked us to join them.

"There was a reason why we were the more ready to fly from Killarney. The Queen was coming to Dublin, and the thought of seeing her gracious Majesty's welcome to Ireland was a strong counter-attraction. On Monday morning we were at Kingstown by 6.30 and so secured good places by the open arcade along which the Royal party were to pass. We had a long waiting before the stirring notes of the National Anthem announced the Queen's presence, as she passed leaning on Prince Albert's arm, the little princes following them. It was a marvellous thrill that the faint footfall of our Sovereign Lady's graceful and stately step made in the hearts of thousands around. 'Our Queen, God bless her, God save the Queen,' burst from many strong men's lips. What a wholesome thing is a good gush of loyalty, that most disinterested of earthly feelings.

“After the procession had passed we went to the Yacht Club, and Archdeacon Magee¹ took us by two at a time in a tub of a punt to his son’s yacht for luncheon. Afterwards we went in a larger boat to a Man-of-War, the *La Hogue*, with 500 sailors and marines on board. The arrangement of the three decks, armoury, cabins, and engineage interested us all, as they were shown to us by some of the officers. While on the upper deck I slipped behind to give tracts and books to some of the men. Lieutenant D’Aguilar, who took us in charge, was a fine specimen of an English sailor, frank, manly, and courteous. We had some talk together about the men. He said that example influenced them so much it was quite an evil, and I replied, ‘What a powerful motive for trying to set them a good example.’ ‘True,’ he said, ‘if one could always.’ ‘Yes,’ I answered, ‘and to try by God’s help to do them good, directly or indirectly.’ ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘if one were good enough oneself. I *am* sometimes, but not always.’ This little talk left me with a great desire to send some tracts to him, with a request that he would distribute them to all the sailors and marines on board, if one could but take courage to do it.

“30th.—It is done, and may God bless it. After we had seen the Queen and her cortège go by to the exhibition, we went to the Tract Depository, and bought a large supply of tracts, and copies of the hymn ‘Just as I am,’ and to-morrow I shall add Testaments to it, and Major Dalzell has offered to take them on board the *La Hogue*.

“September 5th.—On the 31st we arrived at Tandragee Castle. The Duke of Manchester was engaged for the moment with a man of business, but the young Duchess received us with a welcome that made us friends at once, and the friend-in-law, (as I had thought of her,) was a myth of the past. She is very beautiful, with a stately yet most unconscious grace. On Sunday I went with the Duke and Duchess to the Sunday-school where they both teach regularly, and they asked me to say a few

¹ Afterwards Archbishop of York.

words to the children. In church we had an excellent sermon in the morning from the curate, Mr. Johnston. Afterwards we had the privilege of the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I tried to pray for my special navy friends by name. Those most laid on my heart were William Gregory, Jacob Knight, Isaac Russell, Frederick Elliott, John and Henry Huns, and William More. A letter from some of them in Mary Elliott's handwriting has rejoiced my soul.

"On Monday I went with the Duchess to two schools of the Duke's in the park. The cleverness of the children, and their knowledge of scripture, astonished me. The Duke told me that 15 years ago there were 500 children of Roman Catholic parents *voluntary* scholars in the different schools he made on his property. Now, not one dares to come, for fear of excommunication, which would involve the risk of curses, blows, and other persecutions. The Duke gave us an account of his visit to the West last summer. Since the famine year there have been thousands of converts in that district. Fiery is the ordeal through which most of them have to pass. Destitution, if not starvation, stares them in the face, for every one dreaded to employ them for fear of the priest and the bullet. Bibles were taken from them by the priests and were burnt in their sight, but they remained steadfast.

"*Hayes, Friday night.*—The Hayes welcome had lost nothing of its former warmth, but dear Lord and Lady Mayo, Margaret and Edward were the only ones at home when we arrived. Dear Margy has many traits of her delightful childhood in her grown-up life. On Sunday we went to a church at some distance. In the afternoon Lord Mayo makes a short service in the schoolroom for the constabulary force and others. He would not admit us, so after talking to the children we went to read to a blind man. Another man, Morrow by name, stood in the doorway. Margy bade him stay to hear what Miss Marsh was going to read. 'I can't my lady then, I haven't a moment left.' I began telling a true story and quoted several passages of scripture. Morrow still darkened the

doorway and when the story was ended blessed me for my 'elegant preaching.'

"The next day we went to Beau Parc, and walked through the lovely park by the Boyne to Slane Castle. Gustavus and Lady Fanny were away but they are coming back soon. Charles comes to a living in this neighbourhood in a few weeks. Margy and the girls and I drove to see his Rectory. I told the servant in charge to say, 'Mr. Lambart's oldest friend anywhere, had called to see him and Mrs. Lambart and the children.' How it will set him speculating on the ages of his friends to find out who it was."

The next visit was to Beau Parc and she wrote :

"We have had a happy Sunday. Gustavus takes family prayers every morning but on Sunday in the evening also, and afterwards he said to me, 'I owe this to my early knowledge of your blessed father and mother.' Lady Fanny is charming, she visits the poor around, and she spoke sadly of the bitterness and cruelty of some of the priests. A girl on their estate had a wound in her arm caused by a blow the priest gave her with the butt end of his whip because she would not go to chapel; her father, a Roman Catholic, was dead, but she was a Protestant brought up by her Protestant mother."

Of the return journey Catherine Marsh wrote :—
"After an excellent voyage of four hours we landed at Holyhead, and reached Leamington by 10.30, where our kind friends, the dear Riddells, gave us a hearty welcome. The next day we saw many old friends and numbers of the dear poor people.

"*September 20th.*—What joy to meet my precious father and sister again, and some of my navvy friends who came to ask if I had come back safely, and on Sunday several of them waited at the Church door to give their kindly greeting, and a concourse came to the cottage reading."

Now the time had come when Catherine Marsh and Hedley Vicars were to meet, and their friendship of perfect

harmony in thought and in aim was to begin. Catherine Marsh herself has told of this first meeting. "In October of this year, my father, my sister and I, were renewing a friendship of former days by a visit to Terling Place in Essex. A letter was received on the morning of the 11th by Lady Rayleigh, promising a visit from her brother, which caused such a tumult of joyous excitement at the breakfast table, and so much shouting, and clapping of hands amongst the children, as soon as the news was made known to them, that in my ignorance I supposed the young soldier had only just arrived from Nova Scotia.

"At dinner that day he was beside me. Not knowing anything of his character, I ventured rather cautiously at first on subjects one would fain have the faithful courage to speak of to every fellow-creature. At the first touch of the chord his pleasant countenance lighted up and his eyes glistened as I told him a remarkable instance of the Grace of God connected with my father's first sermon. From that visit we date a friendship which cannot be replaced on earth, and the prolonged enjoyment of which is reserved for Heaven."¹

Their friendship grew apace, for theirs were kindred spirits. The solemnity of the great war now drawing near, was felt by all thoughtful minds, and doubtless it added an intensity to the deep interest shared by both of winning souls for Christ.

Soon after Catherine Marsh had returned to her home, Lady Rayleigh, who had been struck by the wise and charming way in which she had cared for and sought the soul of each one of the large party at Terling, wrote to her to ask if she might call her "Greatheart," the conductor of the pilgrims. No truer name was ever given to her.²

¹ *Memorials of Captain Hedley Vickers, Ninety-seventh Regiment.*

² See the description of Greatheart in *Pilgrim's Progress*: "I am a Servant of the God of Heaven, my business is to persuade sinners to repentance. I am commanded to do my endeavour to turn men, women and children from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God." This was his answer concerning himself, while the pilgrims he conducted said to him: "You have been so faithful and loving to us. You have fought so stoutly for us. You have been so hearty in counselling of us, that we shall never forget your favour towards us."

[*The reply.*]

"*Nearly Midnight, November 7th.*—Greatheart, or Great-head, or Greathand, or anything *you* like—I shall like to be. Your precious letter went straight to my heart. God bless you, sweet friend, and fill you and me with 'righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' I am turning that text into a prayer two or three times a day, to see what it will do for me. Yours in no common love, G-h. I have not the brass to write my new name at full length."

The Victory Won, was published at Christmas, with no clue as to its author, but in this, her first book, the charm of Catherine Marsh's writing was felt, for it had an unusually large sale for a book of that kind. In her old age she was gladdened by the following letter from Marian, the elder daughter of Mr. Reeve :—"I have only lately heard this true story, though it happened long ago. A friend of ours when sitting by the seaside, was joined by a lady who in the course of conversation asked her if she had read a book called *The Victory Won*, and she told her that a connection of her own, a then well known Judge, since dead, who was an unbeliever, was persuaded to read it, and consented, 'because it was short,' and through what he read in it, he became quite changed."

BECKENHAM

PART II

THE CRIMEAN WAR AND THE INDIAN MUTINY

1854—1857

“No sound is breathed so potent to coerce
And to conciliate, as their names who dare
Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their names
Graven on memorial columns, are a song
Heard in the future; few, but more than wall
And rampart, their examples reach a hand
Far thro’ all years, and everywhere they meet
And kindle generous purpose, and the strength
To mould it into action pure as theirs.”

TENNYSON.

WHEN 1854 began, England and France were in alliance to defend Turkey against Russia. Every effort to maintain peace that diplomacy could devise had been exerted, but in vain. At the end of March, War was declared, and the effect upon the British people is well described by the Duke of Argyll, who wrote, that it engrossed them “to a degree, and with a passionate violence of feeling for which it is not easy to account. There could not have been more agitation in Rome when Cæsar passed the Rubicon, than in England when the armies of Nicholas crossed the Pruth.”¹

Catherine Marsh’s heart was full of anxiety for the soldiers who were to be sent to the seat of war. She thought the best help that could be given them would be to secure that each man had a New Testament to take with him. At once she set to work to carry out this plan, and to interest the navvies in it. Her letters bring before

¹ From *The Duke of Argyll—Autobiography and Memoirs*, edited by the Dowager Duchess of Argyll, Vol. I, p. 459.

us some of the events that were passing in those heart-stirring times. Her thoughts were now often at Everleigh, with her friends the family of Sir Francis Astley, and especially with the mother, for the parting with her eldest son was close at hand.

C.M. to C.F.M.:

“Pray much about the Army to-morrow, and for Dugdale Astley, he thinks he shall ‘be wounded pretty high up, but survive to see again the faces he loves.’ There are eleven others that we care about, and pray for daily, who will be in the same expedition.”

To her nieces, Louie and Lucy, she wrote from Sydenham Station on *February 29th*.

“While waiting for the carriage I will tell you about the last two days. Dugdale told me he should not be off till to-day, which decided me not to desert my navvies, even to fulfil his own and his mother’s wish that I should be with them on his last Sunday, and at his last Sacrament. For this decision I was very thankful afterwards, not only for the sake of the navvies, for whom it was made, but it also enabled me to work hard all Saturday for subscriptions for Testaments for the soldiers; and it gave me the pleasure of receiving a voluntary offering of ten shillings from our navvies, for the purpose. I took £16 14s. 0d. in all, and received a promise of more. On the strength of this I went to the Secretary of the Soldiers’ Friend Society, and begged him to send 800 or 1000 to-day to meet the troops at Portsmouth, and afterwards I got an order from Dugdale, for the bearer’s admission on board the *Simoom*.

“At 11.30 Lady Astley, Cecy and I went to see Dugdale on parade at Wellington Barracks. I gave away all the books I had, in fact I was getting into the same state of mind I was in after the Chobham visit last June, when at Waterloo Station I well-nigh gave *Bradshaw* away with the tracts and the books, in the extremity of my desire to satisfy all the soldiers’ demands. We dined together at 7, Hugo and his wife came also. She gave Dugdale his sword and belt, and I gave him ‘the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.’ Soon afterwards the

brothers went out for some farewell visits. Then Dugdale returned for the quiet time he wished for with his mother and me. I read the 91st and the 121st Psalms, and prayed with them at their wish. Then I left the mother and son alone, and soon after, heard his sword strike against the doorway, and knew their parting was over.

"This morning Dugdale, Cecy, Arthur, Hugo and his wife, and I had breakfast together, and then we went in the carriage to the Barrack yard at 6 o'clock. The soldiers were standing in lines, but there was a delay, in the non-arrival of three or four. Colonel Dalrymple and I exchanged a few words, and Dugdale and I some earnest words. We had chosen him an Everleigh rose-bud, and he had fastened it on the bosom of his blue undress uniform, and wherever he moved amongst the soldiers or the watching crowd, he was cheered for wearing the red rose of England. As he got down from the coach-box, several strangers shook hands with him, saying, 'God bless you, Captain, success to your arms, and a safe return.' After half-an-hour they put us in the brougham, and we gave them our blessings, supposing we had parted for the last time. But Dugdale had given the coachman orders to stop at the great gateway of Buckingham Palace—the Queen had come out to address her Guards. She stood in the balcony with Prince Albert just behind her, and the Royal children by her side. We understood that she said, 'God bless my gallant soldiers, and grant success to their arms.' We waved farewell to Dugdale, he caught sight of us, and turned and waved his glittering sword in the air."

There is a good description of Catherine Marsh's life at this time in her letter to Caroline Maitland, dated Beckenham, *March 4th*, 1854 :

"Cary mine, I am glad you are helping the Naval and Military Bible Society to provide Testaments for all the soldiers bound for the East. Did you know that none of the old Bibles could be squeezed into the tight war-kit? Nothing but the little Testaments, in darkest purple with gilt leaves (like those I give to the navvies), will fit into

them. It was a wonderful answer to prayer, that they were got in time for the men—after the agent missing his train and we driving like wild about for him! I never had such a joy as when the letter came to say the Testaments were in time, and the delight and gratitude with which the soldiers received them—*excepting* that day twelvemonth, when I saw Mr. Reeve safe into Heaven. Now, think of this, Cary—on March 2nd, 1853, I took from his deathbed the prayer I had written out for him, and which had done its work: ‘O God, wash me in my Saviour’s Blood, and I shall be whiter than snow, and fill me with the Holy Ghost, for Jesus Christ’s sake, Amen.’—and I asked God to make the things of those dying days, in some way, Life to the souls of many. Several of the navvies have told me of the blessing that prayer has been to them. I showed a navy Testament to the Secretary of ‘The Soldiers’ Friend Society,’ and it had that prayer written inside it. He had it struck off for *all* the soldiers’ Testaments—and the specimen came to me, with the statement of what was to be done with it, *on the anniversary, March 2nd, 1854*. If you don’t enjoy the punctuality with which the answer to that prayer came, I am surprised! What it is to me, to have the whole plan for spreading the prayer taken up, can never be known till our hearts are read in Heaven. It does make me wish to be only an empty cup for the Lord to fill, and do just what He pleases with. I so, so love Him for caring about my little prayers.”

Two days later she wrote again, “Our prayer-meeting with the navvies about Testaments for our soldiers, was the *beginning* of this grant for all the 30,000.

“Dugdale’s mother came to us for the first Sunday after he sailed. She went with me to the navvies’ meeting, and at the close I said, ‘This is the beloved mother of the young soldier we have just been praying for,’ and as they looked at her pale, sad face, a tear came into many a manly eye. When she was leaving us, she said, ‘I came here worn, down-hearted, and desponding, and I am going home cheered, hopeful, and believing.’”

The next letter shows the good use Catherine Marsh was again making of her skill in telling character by handwriting. It is to Miss Georgina Calcraft.

“Here is the character well worth half-a-crown! And all I can make goes like wild-fire to help keep a soldiers’ Scripture Reader in Turkey. I am selling my rings to pay his passage, having been sold myself by having my pocket picked at the Soldiers’ Friend Society’s meeting! And my purse had my earthly all in it—so now I am going to try my fate amongst the thieves to-morrow! at Lord Shaftesbury’s Meeting for them at Willis’s Rooms. God bless you, and give you undying interests, and fill your soul with the Source and Centre of them.”

The Fleet was now ordered to be in readiness to sail to the Baltic. The sailors and marines were thought for at Beckenham Rectory. Catherine Marsh and Matilda Chalmers wrote a short letter which they had printed, and this with the soldiers’ prayer, changed into “the Sailors’,” and a little Testament, were put into an envelope addressed “For a brave sailor, from two grateful country-women,” and a sufficient number was sent for each ship’s crew.

In February the 97th Regiment was under orders for active service. Its destination was still unknown when Catherine Marsh wrote the following letter to her adopted daughters. She was mistaken in thinking it was her last parting from this greatly loved friend—seven more weeks of precious time in England were to be added, before the final day.

“*March 31st, 1854.*—The worst of these partings for this awful war is over. We have seen the last—I have an impression it *is* the last—of the most remarkable young Christian I have ever been privileged to meet. He came to Beckenham in the afternoon, and in the evening he addressed about 100 navvies and villagers in Mrs. Hewitt’s three rooms, which were crowded, while many stood round the door. He chose the words, ‘Prepare to meet thy God,’ and no man on a dying bed could have spoken to others with greater solemnity and earnestness.

Yet there he stood, a strong young man, amidst strong young men—‘putting himself alongside of us,’ as Isaac Russell and William Green said to me afterwards, ‘as a fellow-sinner in all things, and yet so good now, and such a man withal.’ They crowded round to shake hands with him, and wish him safety and success. We heard several say, ‘It’s a pity such a fine fellow as that should go to be shot.’ With Isaac Russell and Henry Hunns he had prayer and conversation alone, and several of them proposed a prayer meeting for his safe return. Poor paralysed Mr. B. shed a shower of tears at parting with him. My father blessed him, and we had a parting prayer. On the way to the station he went with me to see a dying navvy at Sydenham, and he spoke and prayed with him. The dying man said that prayer went straight to his heart. While we waited for the train, he said he never could tell me what he felt about the gift of friendship God had given him since we all met at Terling, how it helped, strengthened, and refreshed his spirit; then in a low tone he added, ‘I have one last favour to ask of you—when I am shot, write to my mother, and comfort her as God will teach you.’ I said, that so much prayer was made for him, that we ought to believe he would be specially watched over. He replied he did not doubt it, but his impression was that he should not return. It did not depress him, but only gave him a more solemn trust in God that He would be glorified in him, whether by life, or by death, ending with, ‘If I may but win souls to Him, that is all I care for.’ I believe that is so with him; never have I seen such zeal, with humility and simplicity, such manly strength and power of life and enjoyment, with such utter surrender of it all, as a living sacrifice to the Redeemer, whose loving-kindness is better than life itself. The prospects in this war are so awful we can hardly keep up our spirits in the work of the Lord. I pray hard that no dark events may press us down too low to ‘serve the Lord with gladness.’ Our Scripture Reader for the soldiers, was a Sergeant in the Grenadier Guards, the right man for the work.”

On May 12th she wrote to Caroline Maitland :

" I am so glad that you and Mr. Vicars have met. He had his final orders on Wednesday, and I went to meet him, as I had promised, at Kensington Barracks. He was on parade, and while I waited the sentinel told me, ' Mr. Vicars was the best soldier and the best Christian he ever knew,' adding, ' he reformed 400 of us in Canada from drinking and so on, and would have made us all as good Christians as himself if he could.' "

The 97th was to leave London at 6 o'clock in the morning of May 19th. The sun shone on the long scarlet line of the regiment, crossing Waterloo Bridge with the soldiers' measured tread; a crowd of sad women and children running beside them, the Band playing gaily, " The girl I left behind me." Within the station, there was the waiting train, the officers alert and calm, the men taking their places in perfect order; then, the last words, the last looks, the warning to the women and children to stand back from the train, the signal for its departure, the waved farewells, the attempted cheer as it moved from the platform which changed, as it disappeared from sight, into sounds which told of a woe too great to be repressed into silence. These were the sights and sounds often seen and often heard in those days.

Yet who shall say that war is only a curse? It has its horrors, it has its broken hearts, but what time of prosperous peace has ever called forth such heroic courage, such gentle deeds, such valour and such virtue, as have been seen on many a battlefield, and known in many a camp, in time of war? Florence Nightingale's message to the survivors of the Balaclava Charge, at their annual commemoration, just as the South African War was imminent, tells this :

" I wish I could say there will be peace. But still, as was once written about the advantages of persecution, we may write about the advantages of war, yet few men, and perhaps no women, have seen so much as I have of the horrors of war. But see those manly fellows in time of war, every one devoting, aye, even his life for his comrade,

fetching him off the field without notice or praise from any one, either in words or in print, and if killed in the attempt, his name only goes down as 'killed in battle,' always devoted even to the death, as our great Master and Friend, Jesus Christ, was to His fellow-men. Oh, if such be war, we will not say, 'Let there always be war,' but blessed be war which makes such heroes of fellowship out of war. Sad is the death of our comrades, but we may say, 'Death comes not untimely to him who is fit to die. The briefer life, the earlier immortality.' "

In answer to a letter from Lady Rayleigh, Catherine Marsh wrote :

"The thought to which you allude crossed my mind also when I was getting people together (young men of all classes) to meet your brother. What ! if in getting benefit for their souls, I should injure his ! But he has such a watchful eye on self, and such a faithful trust on the Lord Jesus, that my conclusion was to pray, and not to fear, and especially as the hardships of a soldier's life on active service were close before him. There is something wonderfully *balancing* to the soul in looking at danger in its nearness to oneself and to others. Never have I felt the *soul-sickenings* of spiritual vanity or pride so utterly, as by deathbeds. What then must be the effect on a thinking mind, of the nearness of death to himself and many thousands. One cannot imagine it."

She had lent some of Hedley Vicars' letters to Caroline Maitland, as a *means of grace*, when she was not well enough to go to Church, and she wrote :

"Katie, I have read these letters 4 or 5 times over, for I love them very much. I do not say they are wonderful, because they are only like what we should expect from the Bible that a Christian would be, and the wonder is that so many have the true thing in their hearts really, and yet go on doubting and fearing and poring-in upon themselves instead of simply resting—and thanking God for His free gift, with their hearts' love. These letters of Mr. Vicars have done me more good than going to church ! I feel a solid satisfaction in having seen him. I would not

have missed that morning that you gave me, for anything, but oh ! will he ever come back ! ”

The 97th Regiment was sent to the Piræus to form part of the Anglo-French Force in Greece. A time of great anxiety followed from July onwards, for a terrible outbreak of cholera occurred amongst the soldiers, and Hedley Vicars was constantly with the sick and the dying, but by God's mercy he was kept in safety.

During all this time the work amongst the navvies was being carried on, but in the summer it came to an end, as the next letter tells; it is to her friends, Frances and Penuel Mackenzie.

“ I have wound up my work among the navvies. Sunday evening was our last gathering. The good Lord never wind up His work amongst those precious souls till He has set His seal upon them all. It was Penuel's enquiry, ‘ Have you a Class ? ’ that made me begin to *concentrate my forces* in a cottage, instead of talking to them in groups, and it soon formed into regular worship—thank God, and thank you.”

The two letters which follow are from Captain Astley.

The first is to Miss Marsh :

“ The Camp, Scutari, *May 14th*, 1854.—To-day there seems to have been a decided resolve taken to go bang at it at once, and the *on dit* is, that the Light Division will start about Thursday for some port on the Black Sea, and Divisions by turns follow, ours being the last probably. The idea prevalent is that we are to besiege Sebastopol. If we do, it will be storming, and no humbug, as the Czar has had plenty of time to get it nicely ready for us, and our steamers say he has not been idle. For the survivors it will be a medal worth carrying, but there will be very many whose actions will not be rewarded in this life, and a very solemn thought it is. And at this hour of the night, just as the Sunday is concluding, and the rain is descending in torrents against our frail tabernacle, I bethink me—Is the Pillar of Fire in this tent—and will His Holy Spirit attend me in the coming fight ? I *pray* that He may, and I have great consolation in the feeling that if ‘ the prayers

of the righteous avail much,' no one has them more abundantly poured out for him than I have. This life in camp is a very idle one. Without friends—real friends—around, one is apt to think too little of these things. Your Testament, and Dr. Marsh's book are before me. Oh, pray that they may be a blessing to me. I rode into the country this afternoon, and tried to think of Eternity. And now my mate B. is asleep I mean to ponder well over the service. *May 15th.* I read the second lesson last night, Romans 13. The last five verses seemed cut out for me. I am glad indeed to hear from dear Mother that Vicars is coming out here, and shall look him up *sharp*. Last night I heard some of your soldiers (to whom you gave the Testaments) singing the evening hymn, and 'Oh, that will be joyful.'"

To his Mother: No date.

"Varna Bay. Since writing the above we have just heard the order to embark at 6 a.m. to-morrow, and a pretty mess my tent will be in with packing the effects. I have written a line to each of the dear children—and want to write to Miss Marsh, and have a cover, directed to write to you, dear Mother, as soon as we sight the shore. But should I meet with any accident, as so many do now-a-days, I will add for your satisfaction that I feel quite composed at the thought of being in the field, which one must consider next to sudden death; and that by the help of my Bible, and your and Miss Marsh's earnest letters, I feel prepared to leave all earthly things—though such a happy home as mine is not easy to give up, and such visions of happiness as I sometimes raise in my mind's eye, not easy to forego. Tell *our* Miss Marsh, her last letter I carry with me in my Bible wherever I go, with the little prayer she wrote for me."

As yet no blow had been struck in the war, but by the middle of September it was generally felt that the first dread encounter was near at hand.

While Catherine Marsh's heart over-flowed in sympathy with others, she also sought their sympathy, and Henry Sherer was one of those to whom she turned in her anxious fears. He answered her:

“ Though you must now be very anxious about your friends in camp, as their sterner duties cannot be much longer deferred, yet they are the objects of the same providential and paternal care in the hurricane of battle, as when they slept in the tender arms of their mothers; but it is impossible not to feel they are undertaking a task of extreme peril. We trust them to the God of battles, Who is also King of Salem.”

On September 18th, 1854, the Allied armies landed on the Crimea, and on the 20th, on the banks of the Alma they fought their first battle. England was left in suspense for many days after hearing of the landing of the troops, for the news of the victory of the Alma was not known in London until October 2nd. Then followed the dreaded lists, the names of the killed and the wounded. Lists that were read with thrills of glory, and throes of grief, unknown before to that generation.

Catherine Marsh was at Brighton with her nieces when the news of the victory came. Louie Marshall wrote to Miss Maitland on *October 12th* :

“ We got the *Times* with the lists early Monday morning, and Aunt Katie saw in the list of the ‘ severely wounded ’ Captain Astley’s name. She went at once to London to see Lady Astley, and to her great relief found her full of thankfulness. She had a letter from himself. He was wounded in the neck and cheek while cheering on his men in that terrible charge after the 23rd was driven back. He had had just strength enough to ‘ bundle down the hill,’ and while lying on the ground in the rear had begun this letter to his mother.”

Henry Sherer’s letter which follows next will surely appeal to many who have those they love in the dread surroundings of the war which began on August 4th, 1914.

“ We remark with regret that your friend Dugdale Astley is severely wounded. We must hope that the strong arm is not disabled, nor the swift foot¹ crippled, and that youth and a strong constitution will, with God’s blessing, soon restore him. It is sad to think how many of those

¹ Captain Astley was one of the best runners in England.

strong forms who passed before us in the solemn pomp of the great Duke's funeral last November, are laid low and fill the stranger's grave. The survivors will best be able to tell us how much the heart is taught in a short time in the hour of peril, how many a sincere prayer is offered up (and accepted through Him Who ever liveth to intercede), in the awful calm that precedes the storm of battle. Their parents will not sorrow—even for those who seemed thoughtless—as those who have no hope, if they reflect that the experiences of the soul cannot be measured by days and years, and think how much one solemn hour may teach. There is something heart-stirring in the word Victory, but to the thoughtful ear the merry clash of bells soon suggests the lonely knell, and the shout of triumph is silenced by the voices of Rachels weeping for their children, and refusing to be comforted because they are not."

Catherine Marsh's letter to Miss Maitland, to which the following is the answer, has not been found, but the beautiful reply gives a clear clue to what were its contents.

"Just a few words about your letter. Let us look simply at our Bible, and thank God that when we were yet enemies, He had a Father's heart towards us, and that He has it still towards His wandering children. I see no truth more distinctly laid down in the Bible than this. The belief of it is the great engine for turning our hearts towards God, and for bringing them back as often as they turn away. 'We love Him because He first loved us.' We cannot believe *that*, without giving some faint answer of love again. 'This is the record, that God *hath* given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.' All that we have to do is to believe it, and be thankful. I was asked lately how was it possible that a Being of infinite compassion and infinite fore-knowledge should bring into existence creatures whom He knew would reject His mercy, and be miserable forever, and I knew no answer, but in the words of the Bible where it says of God, 'Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' Read Revelations v. 13, Isaiah xxiv. 20-22, these texts seem to me to look the same way. But there are apparent

contradictions, so I study my Bible to find out the truth, and I could not help telling you some of my dear hopes."

The answer was sent from Terling Place on *October 28th*, 1854 :

" 'Here I am, send me,' has been my heart's language to God since the soldiers began to go out in February. At the same time I wanted a *call*, and to know how to go. I must remember that I have a mother's duties to my adopted daughters, a sister's, and a daughter's duties too—and I am afraid of outrunning my mission chart. But, if I could only know it was the Lord's call, and have a hope that He would get me admission when I got there, I would go with a whole heart of thankfulness. My soul thirsts to be amongst those wounded soldiers, to carry to them the Water of Life as He could enable even me to do. What a *condensed Bible* your answer to my last is to me, you will never know,—until you call for comfort in like manner, and get it given to you."

The response :

"Katie, how I wish that your way might be opened, that you could go to speak to the wounded and dying soldiers. But, Katie, I am thinking too that not one of all those dying men can really be lost because he had no human teaching, or only wrong teaching. God will work His own work and bring Home through bad or good means every soul of man that was given by the Father to the Son. 'All that the Father giveth Me *shall* come to Me.' I do not mean that this sort of fatalism ought to cool or check the utmost enthusiasm for the work that God allows us to work with Him, but it is not true that the eternal destiny of man depends on human agency. I feel too that God the Holy Spirit can teach, and I believe He does teach, the dying, after their bodily eyes and ears are closed. No one knows how God works, we shall never know here, but we shall most likely find in the end 'a great multitude which no man could number' that were brought to rejoice in God their Saviour, without scripture readers, or tracts, or *anything* but the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Do you think

you care more for those dying soldiers than God does? Do *all* you can, and then *trust* God. His purposes can never be put a hair's breadth out of their way by all that Satan can do. And some day we shall not only believe in the dark, but see with our eyes that the Judge of all the earth did do right. I love the soldiers, and pray for them every day, but what I have written to you prevents me from being miserable about them. At least I fall back on this side of God's truth. Without this I do not see how anyone to whom eternity is a reality, could bear the weight of the work he had not done."

The high hopes raised by the victory of the Alma, were dashed down when the news came of the disastrous day of Balaclava, October 17th, yet the dauntless courage of the gallant six hundred who rode into the valley of death shed a gleam of glory over the darkness of that tragedy.

Ten days after the disaster at Balaclava, victory returned to the Allied Armies in the battle of Inkerman on November 5th, but at the cost of a fearful loss of life. A fresh trouble was at hand. The next day a terrible gale wrought havoc in the camps, and wrecked ships which were bringing stores for the Army, now sorely in need of these expected supplies.

Early in November, the 97th had orders to leave the Piræus for the Crimea. They reached Balaclava on the 20th, and on the 22nd they marched into the camp before Sebastopol.

In December Catherine Marsh was staying in Leamington, and she wrote to Caroline Maitland :

"I have found such sorrows here amongst Sir George Cathcart's relations, and others, especially the mourners for Douglas Halkett, killed in that awful charge at Balaclava. His Colonel, Lord G. Paget, wrote that he rode gallantest of the gallant to, and through, the guns. There they lost him, and went on, brave hearts. In the full gallop retreats, he was passed 'dreadfully wounded,' and holding out his hand with bank notes, and a man heard him say, 'for the wives and widows'—his thoughtful benevolence, his gentle chivalry and self-forgetfulness, shining out in the

midst of such agony—but to stop, was impossible. But, Cary, when he found himself alone with his foes, he knew he was *not* alone. He had chosen Psalm lxii. 7 for his own special text, and he found it true. ‘In God is my salvation and my glory; the Rock of my strength and my Refuge is in God.’ It is all so awful out there. Go on praying for our Hedley, and all our soldiers. I want them *all* saved, bodies and souls.”

To her eldest niece she wrote :

“Oh, sweetest Louie, do you remember that night at Terling when I could not sleep for getting up to pray for the dying? That was the night before Douglas Halkett’s death. My letter got there the day of his death, but *four hours too late*, so it was returned. It *cut sharp* to see it come back—but I see it all now—it was to be—that ‘the Lord alone did lead him.’ No distraction from the Cross of Christ, to a human hand leading him there.

“The dear Earles are in great anxiety about Augustus and Maxwell, and there are anxious hearts all around here.”

A few days later she wrote again, to tell of the courage of another of her friends: “Colonel Elphinstone Dalrymple, who was ill of fever in a hospital ship, when he heard the firing on November 5th, got out of his bed, got ashore, and *stealing* a pony, rushed into the thick of the fight at Inkerman, and brought off his Guards triumphantly, returned the stolen pony, and then went back to his bed and to his fever. Now he has been sent home. I know Mrs. Dalrymple, she is charming, it is from her note I have seen this.”

Great and just was the indignation in England when *The Times* correspondent made known the dreadful sufferings of our sick and wounded soldiers in the Crimea, the cruel additional hardships inflicted upon them, and the unnecessary waste of life, caused by the lack of hospitals and nurses. But by God’s mercy a remedy was at hand. Who that reads the life of Florence Nightingale, a name dear to every true English heart, can doubt that it was He who had been preparing her to be His chosen instrument

for their deliverance from their distress which bordered on despair?

“ A lady with a lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good
Heroic womanhood.”

Miss Nightingale, and the company of brave and devoted women who went with her, found misery beyond description in the hospitals; but under her marvellous power of organisation it was, comparatively, a little while before cleanliness, comfort and hope began to prevail in every department, under her wise rule.

Catherine Marsh had a short interview with Florence Nightingale just before she left England, but she knew then there was no hope for her of being sent to the Crimea, because she had not had any training as a nurse.

In the next letter, to Mrs. Mackenzie, on *December 7th*, 1854, she tells of a new interest just opening for her :

“ You will have seen in the papers that navvies are being sent out to work in the trenches, and to make a light railway at Balaclava. I had been praying to know how to get at the 300 who are going, and to give them Testaments, etc. To-day we saw a fine fellow in a ragged fustian coat *going nowhere seemingly*. This convinced us he was a navvy, so we offered him to come into the Rectory for a bit of supper. His was a cheery open spirit, and he nearly laughed aloud for joy, for he had not had ‘ a bit or sup ’ since morning nor had a penny to get it. We settled for his lodging, of course, and I asked him if he could get work here. ‘ No,’ he said, ‘ I’m off on Wednesday to go to the *Roossians*.’ The whole thing was thus given into my hands, and please God I will see them all off from North Woolwich on that morning, and give each man a Testament and a navvy-soldier’s prayer. It made me jump for joy and thankfulness.

“ An Army Chaplain wrote from the Camp that ‘ some of the dying were timidly desiring to lay hold on the Hope set before them.’ What timid hand stretched out to Christ was ever not grasped by Him? This Chaplain’s

work seems an answer to my often pleading that the wounded might be taught to look only to a wounded, dying, and yet, living Saviour; and the dying die with a *living Christ* in their hearts."

The year 1855 dawned very sadly in England, in that black winter when our soldiers in the Crimea were suffering not only from wounds and sicknesses, but also from hunger, cold and every kind of hardship. The opening of two great charities, *The Times* Fund for the Army, and the Patriotic Fund for the widows and orphans of those who were killed in the war, gave ample opportunities for practical sympathy, and for self-denial; also plans were made for sending out warm clothing and comforts to the soldiers, and Catherine Marsh took an active part in these various kindly deeds. In writing to Miss Calcraft she said :

"My Lord knoweth that I had it in my heart to go to Balaclava, but I could not. Now, I have six different concerns for soldiers on hand, and was it not a joy for me to see in *The Times* correspondent's letter from the camp, that the only men who seemed cheerful in the prospect of death, were those who were reading the Word of God. I believe praying for them is the most glorious great thing we can do for them."

Week after week, tidings from the seat of war told nothing that was encouraging. The severity of the winter was hindering siege operations, as well as adding greatly to the sufferings of the soldiers. The splendid army of 30,000 men sent out from England was wasting rapidly away, the men dying by numbers in the trenches, and in still greater numbers through privations, hardships, and the ravages of disease in the camps; so that in January, of the survivors 9,000 were in hospital, and only 16,000 men were left available for the work of the siege.

There was much political excitement in England when this alarming state of things became known. Feeling ran high, with the result that Lord Aberdeen resigned his premiership, and Lord Palmerston was chosen as his successor.

Caroline Maitland was in full sympathy with her friend's deep anxieties, and wrote to counsel her :

"About our soldiers I am sad, and sick at heart over the *Times* account yesterday and to-day. It seems to me that the amount of blindness and feebleness in the Government, and in the managers of everything is quite a supernatural thing, and is a visitation of God upon us. I think you can do everything! Can you get petitions to be signed all over the country for a day of National humiliation and prayer? That is the thing wanted. Try what you can do. Never despise the small things that you can do, because you do not know that it may not quickly 'roll from soul to soul, and grow for ever and for ever.' All people who believe that there is a God at all, and that He does govern the world, would sign such a petition, and surely the Queen, and the ministers would not stand out against such a desire expressed clearly by the Country. How *can* the Government keep still! How *can* the London mob keep still! That is what I wonder at. If three months ago Lord Raglan had said, '*there shall be a road,*' our Army might have been as well off now as the French, instead of starving to death. *Now*, a fall of snow stops all their supplies. God's Hand is upon us. His stormy wind made the *Prince* go down with all its stores. But His Hand has sent out Captain Vicars and others like-minded, and is blessing their work, and gathering Home multitudes of our poor soldiers, to His Eternal joy. *That* I do believe, it is the one point of comfort. But as a nation we are being punished and humbled."

The reply :

"I too felt faint with misery when reading the horrors in *The Times*, and could only cry, 'Help, help, Lord Jesus!' I have made one more pull at the heart of my correspondent of *The Times*, and have printed my appeal for prayer. The Lord do the work. I can do no more."

But she felt that her appeal was not nearly strong enough. So she withdrew it, and wrote another, and sent it to Caroline Maitland with this message, "Write in, or put

out, whatever you like, I can keep in, or keep out, whatever I do or don't, afterwards."

Her request was quickly complied with, and this is the acknowledgment of it :

"Last evening I was with my praying friends at my Elmer's End cottage reading, and felt as I poured out my soul in prayer for our Army, and their fervent 'Amens' kept overtaking me—*this* is what I want to ask England to join in—not that poor languid list of our *slumber-time* as to their danger, for we have been roughly awakened to understand it. On my way home I went to see a dying girl, and then was sent for to another at Penge, so it was eleven o'clock before I got back. Those dying beds spoke to me of the Presence and the Help of the Holy Ghost, so I returned praying to be helped to remember what that Holy Spirit had taught me at Elmer's End, and sat down to write it for *the Call Tract*—saw your hand-writing on my desk—opened your letter, and found almost the same words. Car—one Spirit teacheth. The whole thing is written over again, and it will I hope be out on Wednesday. With a whole heart of love and thanks, I am ever your Katie. Your expressions were almost always best."

Her busy life is told in a letter to Lady Rayleigh on *January 9th, 1855* :

"You are ever in my heart though you do not hear from me, for lately I have been nine hours at my desk, one day eleven, simply on business connected with our soldiers. I have written to every one of those in power with whom I have any acquaintance, and to a great many more, to entreat them to move for a day of National humiliation and prayer. Then, the sending out of books to officers and men, and now getting things for Duncan Matheson, Missionary to the Scotch Regiments, for I heard from his sister that he was sleeping on a box for a bed, with his plaid as his only blanket, and that he had given away his flannel shirts to men in distress from the cold. So I could not let that good man go on in that state ! and several other things of the same sort, so I had no time to write *love letters* ! I take my writing time out of the night pretty far on. Oh,

pray that we may have the Day of Prayer. The Hand of the Lord has gone out against us, and we should have National prayer, with humiliation for National Sins."

Sir Henry Lawrence was sharing in the anxiety. He wrote to Catherine Marsh from the Camp, Rajpootana :

" We are nearly as anxious about the Crimea as you are ; we have perhaps greater reason to be so, for war in Europe, especially with Russia, must affect our *encampment* here ; for at best we are but a camp, and always ought to be ready for war. I cannot help wishing myself in the Crimea, where indeed a large force of our Indians might with advantage be ; and yet I am a man of peace, and am always trying to prevent war. I write from before a walled town held by a refractory chief who would certainly have committed himself had I not paid him a visit at the head of 3,000 soldiers with heavy cannon. He is accordingly very polite, and there will be no fighting. Last month I took my little Army against a wild tribe of robbers who are the terror of the country, and without firing a shot seized enough of their ringleaders to make a sufficient example, I *hope*, as will tend to reform the whole tribe, if I am permitted, as I wish, to give them useful employment and treat them kindly. But, as little Kate told her governess, ' self-praise is no recommendation ' I must stop lest she should give me a lecture too.—With love to them all and to William, yours very sincerely, H. M. LAWRENCE."

Addington Park, then the country residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, is within a drive from Beckenham. There was a friendship between the families at the Rectory, and Dr. John Bird Sumner, the Archbishop at that time, and Catherine Marsh was always a welcome guest at Addington. When any public anxiety weighed heavily on her heart, she corresponded with the Archbishop about it. She wrote now to Caroline Maitland on *January 24th* : " I have sent on to the Archbishop your letter to me, and I wrote on bended knees—not to him but to the Holy Ghost, the Teacher, to turn his heart to undertake to propose it at once in Parliament, or to the Queen."

The Archbishop's answer :

"*January 27th, 1855.*—Two months ago I proposed to Lord A. a prayer for the safety of Her Majesty's Forces in the East. He replied that he should prefer a thanksgiving for our victories, but that the sad losses in our army prescribed it; but that a Prayer or Day of Humiliation ordered then, would spread dismay through the Country and make people suppose that Government despaired of success. I suppose on the principle which governs many of our poor parishioners, who consider the case hopeless when the clergyman is called in. However, I imagine that the same feeling would operate still more strongly now. If anything can overcome the reluctance to interfere with the usual course of services, Petitions are likely to have that effect, when respectfully got up and signed. But the regular answer is, 'We have a prayer,' certainly *not* such an one as would satisfy the feelings of persons like yourself, or your correspondent. However, we must feel gratification in knowing how general has been the desire to seek assistance at the Hands of God, which perhaps has not been done less fervently because it has been done in very few words. I have great confidence in the meetings which you have at Beckenham, there is reality in them, greater than if they were commanded. May God bless your various endeavours for the benefit of your fellow-creatures. Your soul seems not altogether concentrated upon Beckenham—and no wonder!—Faithfully and affectionately yours, J. B. C."

She was far from being satisfied with this answer, as her next letter to Miss Calcraft plainly shows :

"How soul-sickening is all we hear from the Crimea, and where is our Day of prayer and humiliation? I have written about it to the Archbishop till his kindly friendship with me must be turned to gall! He spoke to the late Ministry two months ago, in vain. But I wish he would speak to the new, till he was *hoarse*. If I were Archbishop, I would cry to them till the country rose at the far-off sound! But everything is so sad.—Your down-hearted for the country, and miserable for the Army, and wanting stronger faith, C.M."

At the pleading of the Archbishop a vote was passed in the House of Lords, and was carried in the House of Commons, for the appointment of a National Fast Day. This was immediately followed by a Proclamation from Queen Victoria, directing "the setting apart of a day of solemn fasting and prayer to Almighty God," and the 21st of March was the day appointed.

Catherine Marsh wrote to Miss Georgina Calcraft :

"*February 22nd.*—Blessed be God for the Day of Prayer. When the Archbishop wrote me word that *it was done*, I wept for joy and thankfulness. There is hope for England."

In the interval she quickly wrote a short, but eloquent and fervent appeal for its thoughtful observance. It was published with the title "Behold she Prayeth. Thoughts for the National Fast Day, March 21st, 1855." The following is a quotation from it :

"At the moment this Proclamation was passing through the press, the mainspring of the war was snapped asunder. The mighty will that broke the peace of Europe was lost in One yet Mightier, which 'taketh away the breath of men and they die.' Silently and suddenly, as the Hand wrote on the wall Belshazzar's fate as he feasted, the Voice of Almighty God had said to Nicholas of Russia, 'This night shall thy soul be required of thee.'"

The Fast Day was well kept throughout England, and also in the Camp before Sebastopol. Hedley Vicars had earnestly desired its appointment, and he kept it as a solemn Fast before the Lord. He had chosen the Psalms and the Lessons, and his manner of reading the service deeply impressed those who were present. Late that night he wrote his last letter to Catherine Marsh, left unfinished at the line, "we exchanged our thoughts about Jesus," so the last word he ever wrote was the Name he loved best.

On the evening of March 21st Catherine Marsh wrote to Caroline Maitland :

"The Fast Day. Oh, my Car, what a day has this been ! If ever true for any, it is for March 21st, 1855, and all

that its short twenty-four hours include, ‘*This* is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.’ There was hardly standing room in our old Beckenham Church, and the third service in the school-room overflowed, and my 4th for prayer only, was crammed, and we had to adjourn from the cottage, to the reading-room. God grant a great, wide, rich, deep blessing. Victory for the Army and for countless souls there, and here.”

On Good Friday, the 6th of April, a messenger from the War Office came to Beckenham Rectory, bringing a copy of a despatch from Lord Raglan which told of a serious night attack of the Russians on March 22nd. The closing sentence, “The detachment of the 97th was led by Captain Vicars, who unfortunately lost his life on this occasion; and I am assured that nothing could be more distinguished than the gallantry and good example which he set to the detachment under his command,” shut the door of hope, till then kept half open, that Hedley Vicars would return. His brief but bright career had ended, as he would have wished, in the discharge of his duty as a soldier.

On the same day Lord Rayleigh wrote :

“*Terling Place. Good Friday.*—My dear Miss Marsh,—Edward¹ arrived last night, his Mother had been at the evening service, and had gone to bed early, so, as he had to leave before breakfast, she knew nothing of his coming. He brought news of the engagement and a report, not officially confirmed, of Hedley’s name amongst the killed. By immense self-control her daughters have not betrayed their distressed feelings to Mrs. Vicars, and we expect Edward’s return with the certainty. I do not think his sisters can at present take much comfort from anything, but I do think his has been a glorious campaign, for from beginning to end there has been no visible inconsistency of conduct, and no reproach wrought upon the Name of his Saviour, but consistency, devotion and boldness in the cause of God.

“Later, Mrs. Vicars left the breakfast table and went up

¹ Hedley Vicars’s younger brother, who was in the War Office.

to her room, Mary followed her. I understand that she said, 'Now, Mary, what *is* the matter?' Mary was silent. 'Is Hedley wounded?' Mary still silent. 'You don't mean to say he is killed—I cannot believe it.' Then Clara and Georgie joined them. In a little while their mother wished to be left alone. She is perfectly calm. The three sisters have behaved admirably, they and I feel much for you all. Looking at things as we ought, and as they really are, what could we wish for Hedley that he has not had, *and has*. He has believed God, he has served God, he is with God, he has witnessed a good confession, he has instrumentally saved souls, he has left behind 'a savour of Christ,' and a reputation of 'broad-shouldered' bravery which may, and will, yet be blessed. My love to you all.—Yours affectionately, RAYLEIGH."

On Easter Sunday Catherine Marsh wrote to Caroline Maitland :

"No, dearest Car, this is *not the end*. He is ours for ever, as surely as Jesus Christ is ours. What he was to us can only be known to Him Who gave and has taken him. Would God I might have died to save him. Would God I could have died for the mere joy of dying for him. God grant that the glory of the Saviour, our Hedley's Saviour, may be promoted by this great sorrow, and life be given to many, by his death. I had one dark hour when I thought that God had not been true to His promises. But He would not leave me in that *lowest hell* of doubting him. It was a lie of Satan's to my soul. God has been all Love, all Truth. We asked life for him, and God gave it, 'even length of days for ever and ever.' And He gave him his own wish, to die a soldier's death, doing deeds worthy of his soldier-fathers; listen to his last words to me, and share them as his legacy, 'Jesus is near, and very precious to my heart and soul. . . . May He ever be to you also, my second mother.' If this death does not make me cleave closer to Jesus, and press on more for communion with Him—what else could ! I have lost the friend who was as my own soul."

Letters of sympathy came in numbers, among them

was the following from Henry Sherer, who wrote from Cambridge :

April 15th.—" My mother and I send our true sympathy with you, and all those who knew your noble young friend, Hedley Vicars. We are often in our wonder almost tempted to murmur at what seem to us unaccountable providences, when the useful and noble are early cut off, leaving so many cumberers of the ground. But I think even our imperfect and feeble judgments can trace the hand of Wisdom here. Nothing, no length of consistent life, could have been so impressive to the rough and manly soldiers among whom the earthly ministry of Vicars was appointed, as those months previous to his early and glorious death. How can they ever forget the earnest exhortations which those young lips uttered by the graves of their comrades, or doubt the truth of those principles which subdued to thoughtful tenderness for their souls, a spirit the most buoyant and dauntless of them all. There must be many hearts who will bless to their latest day the hour he came among them, and who will follow him to that blessed place to which he was so early taken. We cannot help observing mercy in the very brief time death was allowed its shadow of victory, withholding for so few moments the crown of Life. Doubtless he had dreamed by his camp-fire of return to the country and home of his affections,—but there are better things than these (dear as *they* are) which God hath prepared for them that love Him. Our best love to you all."

At this time Miss Maitland wrote to Miss Holland, one of Catherine Marsh's special friends at Beckenham: " I know that God is not leaving Katie now to sorrow as those who have no hope. If ever anyone did ' draw out her soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul ' it has been Katie. Now I look to see her ' light rise in obscurity, and her darkness be as the noonday.' It only needs the touch of God's Holy Spirit to make the glorious unseen world *seem* what it really is; and to make the time that separates us from it *seem* as short as it really is."

It was no time for selfish indulgence in sorrow. The love

of the Lord Jesus Christ will suffice to comfort, His sympathy is balm for the heart's wounds, employment in His service can fill the daily life with an interest that will never pass away, and Catherine Marsh proved this to be true.

An urgent call to exertion awaited her. The family of Hedley Vicars earnestly desired a record of his life, and lovingly entreated her to write it. She consented, for she prayed that thus she might help towards the fulfilment of the fervent desire which was in one of his latest letters, "I am so longing that every soldier, before he dies, should be told of Jesus, and made acquainted with all He has done for him." She bent all her energy to writing the book rapidly, for she trusted that by the Holy Spirit's blessing on the true story of Hedley Vicars' life, some part at least of his heart's *longing* would be fulfilled. But it was no easy task she had undertaken, so she took counsel with Caroline Maitland and Henry Sherer, for in their judgment as literary critics she felt great confidence. They gladly responded, and gave her their good and effectual advice. She sent the greater part of her manuscript to each in turn, and gratefully felt the worth of their different suggestions, and Henry Sherer wrote the preface. About this time he wrote the following letter :

"Pray haste the book, with notices of Captain Hammond, young Douglas Macgregor and others. Your own heart will I am sure tell you, in describing the fearless character and gallant death of Vicars, to admit no word that could seem to assume that he was *braver* than those who pressed the cold side of Alma and Inkerman, or filled the red ditch of the Redan—their mothers and fathers and others who loved them, will read it. My only object is to render you as efficient help as I can in your book, which I hope will be blessed by God to the good of many. But out it must be by January 1st, or much most valuable time is lost."

From Miss Maitland came this wise counsel :

"My Katie, whose shoes I am not worthy to tie, you have a little tendency to 'rise up early in the morning' praising your friends; and I want you to let him more praise

himself, *unconsciously*, by his letters, rather than be praised by your words."

The book was finished and a first edition of 10,000 copies was published at the beginning of December. The interest it called forth surpassed any expectation that had been formed about it. A few out of the many letters, which at this time came by almost every post, follow next, showing its effect on different minds and characters. The first is from the Archbishop :

"*January 2nd, 1856.*—You are never again likely to write a Memoir like that of Captain Vicars; otherwise I should beg you not to send it me except at a time when I had no business before me, for I should be sure to lay aside the most important business till I had read the whole. It is indeed a most interesting history in itself; and like other gems gains increased value *from the setting*. May it be as extensively useful as your prayers can desire ! The effect of Divine Grace is not often so manifestly seen. How often are the words 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin,' heard and read and passed by as the idle wind. The Spirit must point the arrow and carry it home."

From Alfred Tennyson, Poet Laureate. "*Farringford* : That any words of mine should be any comfort to those mourning as you must mourn for one so beloved, and so worthy of love, is indeed a source of great thankfulness to me, though well I know it is God alone who can give real and lasting comfort to such mourners as those are, who have lost all you have lost in him. Therefore, I will not trouble you with more words, though I might say much of how even the stranger warms to the memory of so good and brave a Christian, feeling himself no longer strange, but akin however distantly, and full of yearning for the perfect brotherhood of like deeds in the same spirit.—Believe me, dear Madam, yours gratefully, A. TENNYSÓN."

The next is from the Rev. Sir Henry Dukinfield, Rector of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, London, who had married Mrs. Chowne, the widow of Catherine Marsh's uncle.

"*January 12th, 1856.*—My dear Katie,—I have read

your memoir, every word of it, aloud to my good wife. I congratulate you very cordially on the successful result of your labours. You have produced a book—a tragedy of the very deepest interest and you have done justice to the memory of the best Christian soldier of whom I have ever read. I am fond not generally of religious Biographies, they are apt to be exaggerated and full of indifferent theology, and mawkish sentimentality, and there is too often a want of reality about them, whereas in your book Hedley Vicars stands before you a most *real* man, a wonderful and loveable Christian, combining more than I ever knew combined before in one so young, and all the more admirable as his full blown graces seem to have ripened under unusual difficulties.—Believe me, very affectionately yours, H. M. DUKINFIELD.”

From the Rev. Charles Kingsley :

“Your book has interested me exceedingly and it is especially comfortable to me, as a fresh proof of how much of the ancient spirit of our forefathers, which could at once fear God and yet do its duty like a man, is left among us; and therefore I have hope for England; because the spirit of piety which prompts to duty is indeed the Spirit of God, the sign that God is with us; while the spirit of piety which tempts men to neglect duty and citizenship and family ties is a spirit which does not seem to me of God at all. He seems to have been an heroical soul; I have known such, but I have not known them live long—why is it that God often takes away those whom society can least spare? I know not, but He knows, and that is enough.”

From an old friend to C. M. :

“In the house where I was staying there was a wild, clever Harrow boy—very naughty, very pleasant, very handsome. One of his sisters wanted him to read the Memorials and said, ‘You know he was killed before Sebastopol, you will like to read about that.’ ‘Oh yes,’ he said, ‘I know he was, but it is all a lot of lectures about him—that book may be dispensed with.’ But a little later he took it up and read, and read on, the whole evening he never looked up from his book. He had never been down

for family prayers the whole of his holidays, but the next day he came, and the next."

From Henry Sherer :

" There is but one opinion about the book. It is a great thing to have been enabled to present a faithful picture of such a heart and life, to have spoken to so many for him, what his living lips would fain have spoken to all. The sustaining power of Grace and the might of a Saviour's love, shed abroad in the heart and resting on all around."

For some reason she does not mention, Catherine Marsh had not written the subjects for special prayer in 1856 on the last night of 1855, for she put the following heading to them : " Prayers for 1856, not written till February 10th, though many were prayed at the beginning of the year." A short extract will show the high standard she set for herself, " To be wholly Thine, blessed Saviour, to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Give me an increasing hunger and thirst after Thee and after sensible communion with Thee ; and increasing Love for Thy Word, fervency in prayer and delight in Thy Service. Give me to cry with my whole heart and soul, ' more souls for Jesus Christ and glory,' and to have that cry answered. Give me *multitudes* of souls for Thee, and grace and power to feed them. Bless the Memorials of our precious Hedley, beyond all I can ask or think. I would dare to say—in Thy infinite power and love I adventure it,—make it a means of a large revival—especially in the army. Give me grace to be very watchful against vanity about it, or about anything else. Make me very careful and holy in my efforts to do good to the souls of men. Grant me wisdom and grace by Thy Holy Spirit in my intercourse, (choose for us our subjects of conversation,) and in correspondence with my friends. Keep me from everything that might hinder me in winning souls to Christ. Make me a greater comfort and blessing to my father and *all* in our home. Blessed, precious Saviour, I am a poorer sinner than ever to ask these things, but I plead Thy righteousness, Thy precious Blood, shed for me."

The widespread interest in the *Memorials of Captain*

Vicars was shown by the sale of 70,000 copies in the first year. It was in several ways a new departure in Christian biography, and it brought a succession of interests into Catherine Marsh's life and many friendships. The next little letter is a specimen of similar ones received by her. Of some of the writers she heard no more, but others sent her good news when the answer came.

"Will the good kind authoress of *Memorials of Captain Vicars* pray for one who is seeking, sometimes earnestly, sometimes faintly, 'the grace of life.' If an answer of peace is sent, the writer will send you word, and oh may God grant it for Jesus Christ's sake."

Mrs. Vicars and her son and daughters felt that Catherine Marsh had, in a perfect manner, embalmed the memory of their loved and sacred dead. On the first sad anniversary they wrote afresh their loving and grateful appreciation, and sent her a token of it, and she replied to them :

"Your precious letter with its words of love and kindness, and the lovely bracelet will always be treasured by me. Yes, Good Friday and Saturday were dark days with us, as with you. Then came the blessed Easter Sunday with its glorious truths and hopes, and our spirits rose again. So let us rise to walk with our risen Lord in newness of life, above the cares and wears and passing interests of a dying world, to live 'looking unto Jesus' till we grow into His likeness."

On the evening of May 19th, a message was brought to Catherine Marsh that a great number of working men had just come into the village to look for lodgings. It had been a sorrowful day, recalling the last parting of the year before, so she and Mary Vicars, who was staying at the Rectory, went out to meet with them, pleading the promise, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." How abundantly that promise was fulfilled was told later on in *English Hearts and English Hands*, for these were some of the thousands of men who were to form the Army Works Corps in the Crimea. Some weeks elapsed before they sailed, and every evening she met those who lodged in

Beckenham for Bible reading, conversation and prayer. Soon some of them said to her they wished "the whole lot could hear these things." Accordingly by seven o'clock the next morning she was at the Crystal Palace grounds to meet them. They were the strangest set of men she had ever met, chosen only for their working power without any reference to their character. This first set was described by the paymaster as "the finest set he ever saw, and the wildest, just like 400 roaring lions!" Yet she could write of them, as of all the working men with whom she had friendships, "never have they let me hear an oath, or one expression which could shock or pain me." In *English Hearts and Hands* she pleaded for them thus: "Gentlemen of England these working men are your brothers. 'Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.' The working man values your courtesy above your liberality, and your friendship most of all. . . . Show him your interest in his welfare, your desire for his improvement and above all your trust in his honour. But let him feel he gives back as much as he gains. Let him share your hopes, tell him your trials, let him give you his sympathy. Allow him the equality of being able to repay friendship with friendship. God gives it to you, and will you not give it to each other? It was a noble sentiment and a great truth which Judge Talfourd died in uttering—'That which is wanted to hold together the bursting bonds of the different classes of this country is not kindness, but sympathy.'"

One of the incidents of this time was recalled to Catherine Marsh when she was between eighty and ninety years of age. She had sent a short letter that she wished to have printed to one of the great printing firms in London, and received the following letter:

"I am taking the liberty of writing to you, but you will excuse it when you know the circumstances. I am overseer of this printing office, and as such your letter came into my hands, and I saw *English Hearts and Hands* which you sent for my principal. In the short time it was left with me I found so much pleasure, so many reminders of the long past in its pages, that it carried me away from this

busy noisy London printing office, back to the old fashioned village of Penge, as it then was, and for the moment I was a boy again in the old school, the only one in the village, where certain ladies of the district took it in turns to teach the boys, girls and infants, who were not too numerous to be taught in one room. But what appealed to me most forcibly was the account of the fight between the navvies and the police. My father was one of the police engaged in that fight. Your graphic description carried me back to the dark days caused by the Crimean War, and the Indian Mutiny, when it was not uncommon for parents even of the better off class of working people to amuse their children by telling them stories by the flickering firelight to while away the time between tea and bed-time, and so save the cost of candles, in those hard times. Well do I remember that story being told to us by my father, of how he stood with his mates facing those angry navvies, out-numbered by them many times over, in the most dangerous position it had ever been his misfortune to find himself in, and how you, a young lady, came upon the scene and did what few, if any, men would have dared to do single handed, and by your courage and presence of mind undoubtedly saved the constables from serious injury if not from death. When I read it in your book, told in the very words my father spoke to us children—'No, I shall not go away till you are gone. You will not murder these men in my sight,' it is not to be wondered at that I felt proud to think I once knew the lady who was the heroine of such a scene. I have allowed myself to be carried away by recollections—you will excuse the liberty I have taken."

After the first detachment of the Army Works Corps had been sent out, there was a pause until it was seen whether the experiment was a success. Catherine Marsh went to Brighton with her nieces for a short rest, but in August men were again advertised for to form a second battalion, and twice a week she went back to Beckenham to go with her sister to the Crystal Palace grounds to make friends with the new candidates; and whenever a ship was ready for sailing, a telegram from the Agent of the Works

summoned them in time for a farewell visit. In those days telegrams were comparatively rare, and were chiefly looked upon as the bearers of bad news. A telegram early one morning announced the sailing of one of these ships, and Catherine Marsh left Brighton by the next train. In the course of the day two more telegrams reached her nieces, she herself returning late in the evening. The next morning the landlady appeared with a troubled face, to say that "the old lady in the down-stairs apartments had given notice that she must leave at once for she 'dared not stay in a house where three telegrams came in one day.'" The landlady added that she had had hopes of the old lady staying on for the winter, and she had been her lodger several times before. Catherine Marsh asked to be allowed to call on her, which she did, and explained the nature of the telegrams. The first, her summons, was allowed to be quite harmless, the second which was to say that she must change her train for a later one, passed muster also, but when it came to the third, "Have a good hot supper ready, I am very hungry," the anxious look was exchanged for a broad smile, and the old lady declared her willingness to stay on to the landlady's great relief.

The newcomers had been told of the care undertaken of the wages of their predecessors, and they asked to have the same done for them. Catherine Marsh wrote, "This arrangement had become rather a formidable matter, the receipts averaging about £500 a month. I should have found myself very unequal to the calculations, but for the able help of Louie, who undertook to *keep the book for me*, and assisted by her sister to correspond with those relatives of the men to whom allowances were made. At this time the correspondence with the men themselves averaged about fifty letters a week from the Crimea."

While the date for the ships to sail was yet uncertain, Catherine Marsh and Matilda Chalmers went to Terling for a promised visit, and from thence on the 27th, they both and Georgina Vicars¹ set off early in the morning for

¹ The youngest sister of Hedley Vicars, afterwards the wife of the Rev. Frederick Tayler.

Greenhithe, where the navvies on board the *Langdale* welcomed them with cheering hurrahs. On the entreaty "Couldn't ye come again to-morrow?" they decided to remain, and the next day they went to the *Barrackpore* off Blackwall. The four men who had been acquitted of all concern in the Penge fight were on the *Langdale*, and gave her hearty thanks for her efforts on their behalf. The men told her that they gambled all day long for lack of anything to do. She promised to send them a supply of games for the voyage, and asked them to promise there should be no betting upon them. The promise was readily given, and as she heard afterwards was rigidly kept. A good supply of chess, backgammon, draughts, Chinese puzzles, puzzles of historic scenes and Bible pictures, and last (but greatest in favour she was told) a large Noah's Ark!—was ordered for each of the ships.

The next letter, to which no exact date can be found, tells of an unexpected interest that came to her about this time, it is to her sister Mrs. Trench.

"At 9 o'clock the night of my return from London, I was going to bed with a knock-me-down headache, when a message came from 'The Coach and Horses' that 'Miss Marsh must please to go to North Woolwich by 10 o'clock if she would wish to see the navvies going to the Crimea.'" Immediately all the maids in the house offered to come and help paste the prayers into the Testaments whilst I wrote the request for the daily use of *book* and *prayer*. By 12.30 all were done and packed. At 8 o'clock next morning little Kate¹ and I were off to South Woolwich and left the carriage there to wait for us. A steamer took us to North Woolwich, but no crowd of navvies was to be seen there. We were advised to go on by train to Mr. Peto's office at Barking, there we heard the navvies would not be chosen till Friday. We went back and started to steam across again, on the way we looked wistfully at the Hulks where 1,000 convicts looked wistfully at us, and on enquiring

¹ Her niece and godchild, Katharine Cadogan Marshall, afterwards the wife of William Hulbert Wathen, Esq.

how we could get to them I was told 'nothing easier, a likely lad would row us there in ten minutes.' Katie was wild for it, and my heart yearned over the poor men, so a stout sailor chose out a *likely* lad and a safe little boat and we were pulled alongside in next to no time. A bayonet was pointed at us and a stern voice said 'No admittance.' The lad pleaded 'two ladies wished to see the Hulks,' the stern voice refused again. So I prayed silently and the lad said 'They want to give the poor fellows a *track* or two,' and I added 'and a prayer used by many of our soldiers on the battlefield.' The bayonet disappeared and in two minutes its owner, with a superior in command came, and with great politeness brought us on deck. Then he introduced us to the Chaplain, who approved the prayer, and gave leave for its distribution. He then showed us over the three Hulks, and sent for some men just going to be liberated that I might speak with them. At parting I shook hands with them, and said we must meet again at the *right Hand of the Lord Jesus*. Then the kind Chaplain took us in a boat rowed by convicts to the hospital ship that I might speak with the men there also. Mr. Peto will send a Doctor and two Scripture readers with them (may I not go as a third?)—God bless him for this."

When the third battalion of the Army Works Corps was to be completed in November, a scarcity of work in England brought candidates from all parts of the country, and numbers who had had scarcely any money to bring with them, hoped to be chosen at once. As this could not be done, they were soon in great need. Catherine Marsh and her sister, when they paid their daily afternoon visit to the Crystal Palace grounds, saw with deep distress the half-starved look of these poor fellows, so they used to buy, from a man who came every day from London with hot penny pies containing a marvellous supply of nourishment for the cost, from one to two hundred pies, according to the need of the day. Also they were able to get cups of coffee, and bread-and-butter from a little coffee-house near, for the men who had had no meal. She said "it was a fine thing to see several hundred men fall back, to leave

only the famishing men to be fed, that they might not trespass on the little kindness, though many of those who retired would have only one meal in the day."

For this detachment characters were required, and Beckenham Rectory became an office for writing for and receiving the characters of artisans and railway labourers. This gave her the opportunity of speaking with each man separately on the concerns of his soul, and of having a prayer with him. Shortly before the last 500 sailed they gave her a Bible and Prayer Book beautifully bound, as a remembrance. On the day of their sailing she and her sister went to Deptford, and spent six hours of farewell on board the *Jura*. It was a day of intense frost and all the men except two had got on warm vests. As soon as Catherine Marsh heard that these men, when they had repaid the money they had borrowed while waiting to be chosen, had nothing left to buy comforts for themselves, she succeeded in finding a messenger who was sent off at once to London to bring back four warm knitted vests.

"Five o'clock came, the darkness of a December night was deepening. Our last farewell words were said, the last man's hand had been shaken; yet the messenger had not returned. There was plainly some mistake, and the ship would probably sail before the parcel reached our friends. The colder blew the night breeze as we went through Deptford, the more unbearable was the thought of what those two poor men must be suffering. We went from shop to shop in vain, till at the fifth shop they were obtained. But who could take them to the ship? No shopman could be spared. Beneath a lamp in the street stood a group of boys. Its light fell on a face which seemed to introduce the sort of messenger I desired. The story was told him. 'Now, my boy, we are strangers, and I do not want to know your name, nor where you live. You might take these vests, and make twenty shillings upon them, or give them away to your father and brothers if you chose. I should never send the police after you, but my confidence in the honour of English boys, which stands so high now, would be broken down. And those two nobly

honest men would suffer, and might take cold, and go into a consumption, and die; and their wives and children break their hearts about them.' The boy's eyes flashed under the lamplight, and snatching the parcel, he said, 'Trust me, I'm the boy for it.' Eighteen pence was all that we had left with us after paying for the vests. I told him how sorry I was for this, but it would pay his boat each way, and he would have sixpence, and a happy heart to lie down with at night. 'It's a plenty,' he replied, 'father's a waterman. I shall get his boat for nothing. All's right,' and off he ran. By the last post on Saturday evening came a note from one of the ship's officers, to say that a boy had brought a parcel on board, and 'had delivered it to the two men in the presence of the Captain of the ship, the chief officer of the Corps, and the medical officer.' Having discharged his duty, the last sound heard amidst the splashing of his oars as he left the ship's side was the shout, 'Tell that 'ere lady I kept my word, and the jackets was in time.' All honour to the English boy who sustained my right to trust my brothers young or old. The world is not so wide but we shall meet again, I hope, and meet when we may, the trusty and the trusting will be friends."

The Crimean War drew to its close this autumn. The siege of Sebastopol was carried in September, but the terms of Peace were not actually signed until March 1856, when Sunday May 4th, was appointed to be kept as a day of thanksgiving to God for the accomplished victory and for the end of the war. Catherine Marsh wrote to Lady Rayleigh:

"*Thanksgiving Sunday.*—To-day we vainly seek for the full-hearted thanksgiving that would have been ours had our Hedley been spared. But God has given me two deep joys this week: one, in hearing of the change His grace has worked in the soul of a young man to whom He let me give a message from Him, when I met him in London, beset with outward snares, three months ago; and now He is enabling him to break through them. The other joy is in seeing the stedfast cleaving to Christ, the humility and the seeking

to win souls to Him, of my young navvy William Radcliffe, and I know not which of the two is the richer joy."

A few days later her thoughts and her time were fully occupied, for, with the declaration of Peace, the return of the troops and of the Army Works Corps began. "On the 8th of May, 1856, the *Cleopatra* anchored off Portsmouth, and 600 men of the Army Works Corps with exuberant joy stood again on English ground."

Open house was now kept at Beckenham Rectory for the men, who usually came in little companies; all were more grateful than ever for the friendship made with them before they left England, and all were anxious to have a few more words of counsel and help before setting off again on their wandering life; also some of them were going to America, Canada, or Australia, to settle there. Coffee and cake were provided for these visitors, and Catherine Marsh had a talk with each alone. There was much to make her heart glad, but other things were told which gave her sadness and anxiety. Many remembrances were brought to her from the Crimea, by her grateful friends—but those which touched her most were little stones, dried flowers, and blades of grass from one grave, to which they all seemed to have gone. Some of them had spoken with soldiers of the 97th Regiment, and told her of the words of loving reverence which they heard spoken of Captain Vicars.

They also told her: "Once we heard as you was dead, and nigh two thousand of us ran together and prayed God it wasn't true."

The chief agent at the Office of the Army Works Corps in London, Mr. Parrott, kindly sent word to the Rectory of the day and hour when the men were to meet in the Crystal Palace grounds for their final payments, and thus she was enabled to see any of those who had not been able to go to Beckenham. She wrote the following description of one of these meetings:

"It was pay day for the carpenters of the Corps, and most of them were 'radical reformers,' and they spoke of the want of sympathy between the different classes,

with some bitterness. I admitted the want of it was too general, but simply because they did not know one another, adding that if they had more confidence in each other they would find what cordial friendships could be formed without losing their positions on either side. After talking this over together I said, 'Let us never forget that there was One of more than royal birth, who for sympathy's sake became a working man in the days when working men had their wages reduced by fraud, or seized by violence; He dwelt with His foster-father, and was "subject" unto him.' A few more words touching His sorrows, and His sufferings unto death, were listened to with earnestness; and then those words of living power, 'Now then as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God,' seemed almost to startle them into a resolution to live with a new aim. Many a hand was stretched out to mine from every side, with the simple words, or others of like import, 'I'll try to do it, and to get others along with me, if God will help me.' "

Among the officers who had been invalided home from the Crimea was Robert Anstruther, a young captain in the Grenadier Guards. He was another of the many in whose spiritual life Catherine Marsh was deeply interested, and in him she found a hearty response. The early training of his mother had prepared the way, and the death of his younger brother, who was killed in the battle of the Alma,¹ had strengthened the impressions of his childhood's teaching, for a time. But just when the world was spreading its most alluring snares for him, Catherine Marsh was the messenger who led him to surrender his heart and life to the call of Divine Love.

¹ It was of Harry Anstruther's death that Richard Chenevix Trench wrote his beautiful poem, *After the Battle*. The Duchess of Gordon wrote to Catherine Marsh: "I suppose you have heard of Harry Anstruther, aged eighteen. His brother-in-law, Captain Kinloch, read and prayed with him daily, and the night before the battle of Alma, Harry said, 'Now I understand the question, "O Death, where is thy sting?"' Since Christ has taken the sting for me, I am quite ready for the Lord's will.' "

It was through Captain Anstruther that her great friendship with Stevenson Arthur Blackwood began. He also had just returned from the Crimea, and was in the height of enjoyment of the London season. From his striking appearance he was known in society as Beauty Blackwood, and while he was receiving the best the world could give of pleasure and admiration, he was in danger of falling into the deep-laid plots of the great enemy of souls. Then Captain Anstruther brought him to spend a day at Beckenham Rectory, and he went with Catherine Marsh to her cottage-reading at Elmers End, and afterwards had a heart-to-heart talk with her alone. On returning home he told his sister, who had always prayed for him, "I have found peace, or the way to it, at Beckenham." Thenceforward he turned his back to the world's allurements, and set his face to follow Christ, to be employed in His service, and to his life's end he kept to his high purpose.

In the autumn Catherine Marsh went to Scotland with her nieces. Several of her former friends were visited, and some new friends were made. This year there was one visit which she ever thought of as a green memory, for then began a friendship most dear to her heart. It was to Keith Hall in Aberdeenshire, where in former days she had been the guest of the young owner, Lord Kintore. He had since married a very youthful wife, and they had three little sons; she was asked to time her visit to be present at the baptism of the youngest. Here she met for the first time the well-known Dr. Guthrie, the champion of the poor in Edinburgh, who was to conduct the baptismal service. This was held in the drawing-room in the evening, and the little scene remained clearly in her memory; the tall lamps shedding a soft light over the group round the font, surrounded with white flowers—on the grand head and fine figure of one of Scotland's greatest ministers, on the fair face of the beautiful infant he was dedicating to Christ and His Service, on the happy father as he presented his child, and on the lovely young mother beside him.

The prayers then offered by the man of God had

their full answer in the life of that child, Ion Keith Falconer.¹

From their very first meeting Catherine Marsh felt a deep interest in Lady Kintore, and the interest was mutual. The friendship was steadily growing, when a few days later a telegram came telling of Dr. Marsh's sudden illness, and this brought the visit to an abrupt close. Catherine Marsh's mind was painfully quick to magnify the danger, and to anticipate the worst, when any one she loved was ill; and this was doubly the case when it concerned her father. Her young hostess now became full of sympathy, and all the arrangements for the hurried journey were planned by her with thoughtful speed; while she noticed with surprise, that notwithstanding her fears, and her acute distress, her newly made friend's trust in God remained undiminished and unshaken. Long years after, Lady Kintore recalled this time in a letter to Catherine Marsh for her ninety-second birthday:

"My heart goes out to you in special love as I think of the lovely long life God had granted you, and we have known and loved one another for 56 years of it. God brought you to me to be the bearer of light to my soul when I was walking in darkness. It was soon after my Ion's birth. You had sent me the *Memorials of Hedley Vicers*, it awoke in me a desire to know the author, and it was not long before I saw that you possessed a living faith to which I was a stranger. I thank God over and over again with grateful heart for having made you the instrument for bringing me to Christ."

A long time of anxiety followed the return home, but the beloved father was given back to his children for seven happy years.

Just at this time Catherine Marsh had a letter from a man of business in Liverpool, which deeply interested her.

¹ After a distinguished career at Cambridge, both in learning and as an athlete, he was appointed Professor of Arabic; but shortly afterwards he resigned the post, having dedicated himself to Missionary work among the Mahomedans in Southern Arabia, where he died, in the prime of his young manhood. See *Memorials of the Hon. Ion Keith Falconer*, by Robert Sinker, D.D.

He wrote : " You will pardon the liberty a stranger takes in writing to you. I am induced to do so from having heard and felt the influence the *Life of Captain Vicars* has had over those who read it ; will you permit me to request the publication of a cheaper edition, to enable a greater number to obtain a copy of one of the most interesting, and under God's blessing, most powerful means in the conversion of souls."

She willingly complied with the request ; and the result showed how well the stranger understood the need, for Messrs. Nisbet wrote that 30,000 copies were ordered by the trade on the day of its publication, adding, " this sale has so far been unprecedented."

In March of the next year, the letter which follows reached Catherine Marsh. It throws a clear light upon the inner life and deepest feelings of Sir Henry Lawrence, when he was entering the year which was to be the last of his life, for it is dated January 26th, 1857.

" Many thanks for your kind letter, and kind thoughts of and for me. The texts are most applicable to myself for indeed I need to have my iniquities blotted out, and to have a clean heart, and a renewed spirit. I want also both thankfulness and trust ; above all I want the Holy Ghost and faith, and I need to lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset me, and most gladly do I be a sharer in your prayers, and trust that both you and your dear father will not forget me, for much, very much I need them, always, and especially at this season when I have a new and arduous field before me ; a Sebastopol of civil life, an Augean stable of strife and contention to cleanse and, I fervently trust, a reign of tranquillity and goodwill to substitute. I go to the work, as many soldiers went to the Crimea, with their hearts elsewhere. I go simply and entirely because I consider it my duty to go. I leave my dear sister and little daughter to find their way home alone. I forego my long desired opportunity of seeing my sisters and other friends, yourself included, an opportunity possibly never to return—because I feel that my experience in the Punjab and Rajpootana will give me,

with God's blessing, the power to do good. I have the Governor General's *entire* confidence, he selects me from all India, from the crowds who wanted to go; I reply that I am in bad health and am advised to go home, but 'I am ready to try.' He replies, 'I wish you to stay.' His last letter tells me, 'I am in great hopes that the task being so thoroughly congenial to you it will sit more lightly upon you than measured by its labour alone might be expected, and as to any support you shall have it heartily. The field before you is noble, full of interest and opportunities for good, and I look forward with the greatest confidence to the result of your exertions in it.' You will not I hope misunderstand the vanity that dictates my copying the above quotation. I wish my friends to understand I have not abandoned my private duties from personal or selfish motives. My *wages* are the same in Oude as here. The heat, and the work are greater. I go to a sea of contention. All at present is anarchy. I go as a peacemaker. I feel that I *shall* succeed. I did so in the Punjab (forgive all this egotism), it affects nine millions of people, and a magnificent country containing the homes of a hundred thousand of our native soldiers. I am delighted to hear of the success of your books.

"Yours very sincerely and affectionately,

"H. LAWRENCE."

On July 29th, 1857, Robert Anstruther and Louisa Marshall were married in Beckenham Church. A day or two later Catherine Marsh wrote to the Duchess of Gordon:

"The evening before the wedding, we had the Holy Communion, my father and Louie's father administering it. Sir Ralph and Lady Anstruther, the dear Rayleighs, and Stevie Blackwood, joined in the service with our large family party. The next day the Church was quite full for the wedding. My father read the first part of the service, and the Archbishop of Canterbury read the rest. We had a great gathering of neighbours and friends, and on the lawn there was tea for the villagers. Dearest

Sydney¹ was a comforting help to me in the wrench of my giving up to another, the darling life of my earthly life for so many years. I need not tell *you* that Lucy and I feel as if half the light had gone from our daily path, but we cheer ourselves with their happiness in each other."

While the affairs of our country were to all appearance quiet and prosperous, the thundercloud was gathering in India that burst in the storm of the Mutiny. In June, with startling suddenness, news came to the Government that a mutiny of the Bengal regiments had begun at Meerut, and that after massacring their officers, the mutineers had made their escape up the Ganges, to Delhi. Mail after mail brought darker and yet darker tidings of the spreading mutiny with its deeds of horror. The indignation of the country rose to fever heat. Lord Palmerston and his Cabinet felt with the country; troops were sent out with all possible despatch, with the gallant Sir Colin Campbell as Commander-in-Chief.

"Then like stars in a midnight sky, shone out the dauntless deeds of the brave men who by God's mercy quenched that outburst of fury; and brightly shone not a few instances of the steadfast devotion and loyalty of some of the Indian Princes and their people, and of native servants.

"There are names that cannot be forgotten: among them those of Sir Henry Havelock, Sir James Outram, Sir Herbert Edwardes, and Sir John (afterwards Lord) Lawrence, who lived to receive their well-earned laurels from their grateful country; while numbers, equally gallant, laid down their lives on the field of battle, like General Nicholson, the hero of Delhi, 'a youth in years, a veteran in the splendour of his achievements, and others who died at the post of duty, like Sir Henry Lawrence, killed in the Siege of Lucknow, whose memory sufficed to sustain the constancy of the besieged.

'Never surrender, I charge you, but every man die at his post,
Voice of the dead whom we loved, our Lawrence the best of the brave.'

¹ Dowager Duchess of Manchester, afterwards the wife of (Sir) Stevenson Arthur Blackwood, K.C.B.

Catherine Marsh has left her own description of this dark time.

“Never, since she won a name amongst the nations, has England heard so terrible a voice saying, ‘What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God,’ as that which came in a fearful whisper along the electric wire as she dreamed away the warm days of a glorious summer time, amidst its lavish fruits and flowers, and in view of a golden harvest. No stirring of the air betokened the approaching whirlwind which was to tear up human hearts by their roots. No wandering cloud on our clear sky gave warning of the deluge of innocent blood which was then crimsoning India.”

These words are taken from a short pamphlet called *England's Sins and India's Martyrs*, which she wrote “hot from her heart,” for October 7th, the day set apart by Parliament for prayer and humiliation. Fifty-seven years later Mrs. Basden, whose husband was a General in the East India Company Army, wrote: “An officer in India told me that during the Mutiny, the day of decided victory of the English, and which determined the fate of the country, was the Day of Prayer and Humiliation in England.”

It was August 22nd before the news of Sir Henry Lawrence's death on July 4th, reached Beckenham Rectory. Catherine Marsh wrote :

“We have lost that good and great Sir Henry Lawrence, to me most true and helpful friend. Every plan one suggested to him for soldiers in India was carried out with a promptness and greatness which astonished one. Everything I was anxious about at home he helped me to carry through. But what is all private loss, to the loss he is to our people, our ‘sheep appointed to slaughter.’ How little his two dear boys Alick and Harry thought that they were orphans on the happy day of Louie's wedding, when they were with us at Beckenham. I have such a touching letter from Alick, enclosing his father's last letter for me to see, such a gallant, noble, fearless letter. He wrote that he would undertake to meet 100,000 mutineers in Oude if

Government would send him two columns of 500 European soldiers each. All his anxiety was about Sir Hugh Wheeler and Cawnpore; Lucknow he thought was safe, though he had but 300 European soldiers left."

She did not let her feelings evaporate in words; they were turned to a practical use, as the next letter shows; it is to Miss Calcraft:

"Would you like to collect anything (quickly) for a library for wounded soldiers in Calcutta? I hope to send it out in a fortnight. One of my nieces, Honoria Marshall,¹ was with her Uncle Sir Henry Lawrence, but when he went to Oude, he sent her to his brother John in the Punjab to be with his wife and little children at Murree in the hills. We have just got a letter from her, a calm, *great* letter. They have twelve of the faithful Guides to protect them, and some hundreds of mutinous Sepoys are in the neighbourhood. Oh, Georgy! *has* the good and strong Lord preserved them? *I believe He has.*² India will wake up some day to find out what she has lost in Sir Henry Lawrence. He gave away by far the larger part of his income in the wisest and best of charities, and his public works were the result of an enlightened and Christian policy. He had a head to rule, a heart to love, and a hand to conquer. Do you remember Dr. Duff telling us at Huntly Lodge, of Sir Henry giving him £3000 for his Missionary College, as simply as most people would give three sixpences? When I think of that good and gallant spirit gone, and many more of the same school, of the little companies of brave men, surrounded, out-numbered, and massacred, of helpless women and innocent babes, tortured and murdered,—I feel my faith would rock now if I did not know, believe, feel—that over it, through it all—*God is love*. Love, to them, our martyred ones—and that they will tell us—God was love, even then—in a glorious immortality. Who shall say what a long lifetime work of Grace was not wrought by a triumphant Holy Spirit in *all* those souls—whilst the Devil and his incarnate crew were

¹ Afterwards the wife of Major Frederick Murray Hay Forbes.

² They all were kept in perfect safety.

wreaking their raging malice on each house of clay. Think of the moment of escape—into the company of Angels, amidst the hosts of the redeemed—into the presence of Jesus, the Saviour. Oh, work for souls now, ‘The night cometh,’ but also the morning. My father feels these Indian things fearfully, and wants to go out and fight!”

The letter which follows, was written by William Edwards, Esq., B.S.C., Judge of Benares, etc., author of *Personal Adventures during the Indian Rebellion*. He was a stranger to Catherine Marsh.

“Shortly after the Mutiny began I received a copy of your book, *The Victory Won*, and after reading it myself with deep interest, I lent it to a young friend at Futtehghur. I received it back from him just before the outbreak, telling me how much he had been impressed by it, and instructed. Poor fellow, he, his young wife and two sweet children were a few days afterwards murdered by the Nana. You may be thankful to feel that your book may have done much to support those poor martyrs through their fiery trial.”

BECKENHAM

PART III

ADDISCOMBE—H.M.S. "BRITANNIA," ETC.

1857—1860

"Through all the land let every hand give service for the Master;
They work best who remember that well prayed is well begun.
Each loving thought with action fraught will speed the victory faster,
For great works are made up of little works well done."

E. F.

IT was in January, 1857, that a completely new interest which had far-reaching effects, began for Catherine Marsh. Mr. Chalmers heard that a son of one of his Indian brother officers was at Addiscombe, the Military College of the East India Company, only about four miles from Beckenham, and he asked him to spend a Sunday at the Rectory. He came, and on the next Sunday brought another cadet, and a friendship with them both, that never knew a change, began for Catherine Marsh, and soon she had many more friends amongst the cadets. Sometimes the introduction came through a mutual friend; or the mother or sister of a cadet wrote to ask that he might be invited for a Sunday. Once or twice the same request was made in an anonymous letter; and in one instance a Roman Catholic priest wrote to ask her to be a friend to his brother, adding that if he had had the slightest hope that his brother could be persuaded to join the Roman Catholic Church he would never have made the request. The special help that Catherine Marsh gave them, was in a short conversation and prayer which each one always had alone with her in her boudoir. There, one after another made his decision to give his heart to Christ; and those who had already made it were

strengthened in their endeavour to lead a steadfast Christian life. They soon set apart an hour of their recreation time on one afternoon in the week, when they met to study a chapter in the Bible, and have prayer together. It is a true saying, "No man whom the Saviour has once taken by the hand, can help holding out the other hand to a fellow man,"¹ and, therefore, as opportunity came, they asked others of their comrades to join with them in this, and it proved a help to many, for it required some courage to do it. By the end of the term there were twenty-five cadets who spent their Sundays at Beckenham by four or five at a time.

Sir Frederick Abbott, the Governor of Addiscombe, soon recognised and valued the great influence for Christian principle and high-minded conduct, of Catherine Marsh's friendship with the cadets. It was a unique influence, and it began for them at the time when both heart and mind were most impressionable to receive it. A friend who wrote to a cadet asking at what age *boys* entered Addiscombe, received the reply, "*Men* enter Addiscombe from fifteen to eighteen!"

These very young men hung on her words, and looked up to her as something between an elder sister, a Guardian Angel, and a "Mother in Israel." They placed confidence in her, for they knew she would never betray it, they trusted in her sympathy, and gained strength in her friendship; while for her it was a never-ending source of thankful interest to watch over their souls, and to have their true young friendship. She never failed to be present on the grand day of the sports, and always had the pleasure of seeing many of her friends gaining prizes for their athletic successes. They were also amongst the foremost of the studious ones, for in each of the two years in which she had known Addiscombe, the highest prizes to be won in the College, the sword of honour for the best conduct, and the Pollock medal for the scholar who had gained most distinction, were won by her friends. In 1857 they were

¹ From a sermon preached in the University Church of Cambridge by the Bishop of Minnesota.



CATHERINE MARSH, ABOUT 1858.

gained by William Henry Pierson, who had a distinguished career in India, but it was cut short by his death in the forty-second year of his age.¹

In 1858 the same double honour was gained by Arthur Elliott, of whom more later on. Addiscombe had its own roll of honour. Many names on it have passed from remembrance, for "the frontier grave is far away." But there are others unforgotten in the annals of our Empire, and some of them have the added lustre that they were known as faithful soldiers of Christ; amongst these were Hastings Harrington, and James Dundas, winners of the Victoria Cross.

A fight of another kind had to be fought at Addiscombe now. It required the courage which obeys the call of duty, and silences the voice of self, for it risked the loss of what is naturally greatly valued by young men—popularity amongst their comrades. Yet the difficult task was well carried out, with the result that by new regulations a complete stop was put to the wrong-doing. It fell to the lot of Charles Baldwin, one of the most popular of the cadets to bear the brunt of their displeasure, for the law-breaking occurred first, this term, in the barrack room of which he was the sub-officer. Catherine Marsh tells the story in the following letter :

" You remember Charles Baldwin's noble stand a month ago, against the drinking parties, and how the cadets (except the 25) cut him, amongst them his own friend G. —, that did cut him to the quick. So he and I met on Sunday afternoons to pray for a change in them all, in this '*friend*' especially. Also, whilst making this stand, and bearing no end of insults calmly and patiently, this great-souled youth was still without any distinct hope or joy in the Lord. On Sunday he was with me alone for a longer time than usual, for reading and prayer, and at the Barn at night listened earnestly to 1 John v. (his own choice of subject). On Monday he wrote, ' It is my turn now to

¹ After receiving his commission, he wrote to Catherine Marsh : " I am more than ever conscious of sin, and consequently feel God's love and mercy more and more, and I know I am resting on a Rock."

see and experience the fulfilment of the promise, "While they are yet speaking I will hear." Two of our prayers are answered. G. spoke to me to-day in a kind way—a very significant circumstance, since it is the first word I have had from him since the 4th of this month, and I hope and think it is the prelude to something more. And secondly in my own case, I have never, before last night, felt "I am saved"—and then I did, and do feel it now, thanks be to God. I feel now fairly started on the course towards Heaven, and I do pray fervently that I may never look back, but grow in grace and in love to God and my neighbours.¹ I have felt so entirely contented and so happy to-day and have good reason for it. I shall write again in a day or two, but have only time now to tell you the joyful news.'

"Then, a letter from James Morant tells me that two of Charles Baldwin's bitterest opponents have of late come to him (J. M.) for reading the Bible and prayer every night, and one of them hopes to be admitted to the Table of the Lord next Sunday to make his open confession of faith. He has told Charles how ashamed and sorry he is for the past, an acknowledgment received by him with a ready clasp of friendship. Twenty-eight now come to their weekly meeting—though five of their number have sailed for India, all consistent, sound-minded young Christians, thank God."

Part of a letter from Catherine Marsh to one of the cadets :

"Keep close to the Lord Jesus, rest on His Love, look to Him for grace to help in every time of need. Seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and plan nothing without asking His guidance. Make His Word the Man of your counsel; and remember that the Lord Jesus is the 'Wonderful Counsellor,' and that nothing is too small to ask His guidance in, and His blessing upon. Choose the children of God for your friends. Pray for grace never to be ashamed to confess Christ."

¹ His prayer was fully answered; his life was a "shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day."

In 1858 the Government of India passed from the East India Company to the Crown. At the December examination the Minister of War, Lord Stanley, afterwards Lord Derby, addressed the cadets for the first time. Owing to the great need of officers to replace the number who had been massacred in the Mutiny, some twenty or more of the senior cadets had been sent to India with direct Artillery Commissions in the previous autumn and her first two friends were among these. On this occasion sixteen cadets attained commissions in the Engineers and Artillery; these could only be gained by steady hard work, and eight of those who won them were Catherine Marsh's friends, and twelve of the fifteen prize men in the examination belonged to the same band; thus it was clearly seen how diligent these young soldiers of the Cross had been in preparing themselves to be soldiers of the Crown; and her heart was glad, and very thankful. At the same time she felt deeply for the great disappointment of one cadet of this brotherhood. Robert McLeod Hawkins, who was one of her special friends. He was assured of his commission in the Engineers, and it was recorded in the College by the examiners that it was "certain he would have stood well in the examination," but he had met with a serious accident, which changed his career.¹

Some early recollections of Colonel Henry Stephenson Clarke, recall this time. "It was my privilege to become acquainted with Miss Marsh early in 1857, when I was a cadet at Addiscombe, and thus began a friendship which has been one of the greatest blessings of my life. Through the kind thoughtfulness of a brother cadet I had the introduction, and I can never forget the welcome I received at Beckenham Rectory from Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers and the other members of that beloved family. The Rectory soon became like a second home, and its inmates my dearest friends. I had heard of Miss Marsh's work amongst the Crystal Palace navvies, but I was not prepared to meet one who would at once impress me with a sense of her

¹ He became a scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge, and was ordained in the Church of England.

sympathy, and of her desire to do good to all who came within reach of her wonderful influence. The home-life in the Rectory helped to inculcate any serious impressions made, for we saw exemplified there the happiness of a consistent Christian life amidst the daily occupations of a busy house; and there was an atmosphere of prayer, the power of which we felt and realised. From my first experience of Miss Marsh I was struck with the capacity of her heart to receive and to bear the burdens of others; also she had the faculty in conversation of finding out if you had any special difficulty and of saying the right thing to remove it. The number of her friends among the cadets soon increased, and after morning service at the dear old church it was usual to see many cadets at the long dining table at the Rectory. At the close of the meal Dr. Marsh gave a brief address on the Collect for the day. Thus a great number of the young fellows, just entering the Indian Army, were helped spiritually. More than once I have heard her say her work amongst the Addiscombe cadets was one of the happiest chapters of her life. Those who received letters from her, when they were in India, can never forget the pleasure it afforded. How she got through her enormous correspondence remains a mystery that cannot be solved. Her letters in that well-known dear beautiful handwriting, full of words of comfort suited to their particular needs, were a joy to receive, which none but those who have experienced it could describe—only second to the pleasures of meeting her face to face. I recall interesting meetings on the Rectory lawn, and one stands out vividly in my memory, when Miss Marsh spoke to a number of soldiers, chiefly Grenadier Guardsmen.¹ There was at all times a grace and dignity in her mode of address, as well as an intense warmth of heart and sympathy in her words, but that day I was most impressed when, in giving most clearly the Gospel invitation, she used the grand and familiar words of the Te Deum, 'When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open

¹ They were seventy or eighty members of Captain Anstruther's Bible Class, to whom she was giving a tea-party.

the kingdom of Heaven to all believers.' I feel sure her words that day went home to the heart of many a listener."

Another recollection of Catherine Marsh which was written by Lady Victoria Buxton,¹ dates from this time :

"It was in the year 1857 that I first saw Catherine Marsh, when I was staying at Norwood with my Grandmother, Lady Roden. Mr. Chalmers, the saintly Rector of Beckenham, used to pay her pastoral visits there. His sister-in-law, Miss Marsh, came with him one day to call, my Mother having known her years before at Birmingham. She was very tall and stately, one of nature's noble women, and she was always tastefully, though simply, dressed. She had an intensely sympathetic and winning manner, and a beautiful voice, and I was at once strongly attracted to her. She threw herself with interest into whatever one said, and this was part of her charm, bringing in, when opportunity occurred, what her heart was evidently so full of, her Divine Master, and His work; she seemed to draw one irresistibly into His Presence, yet never dreamed of asking any personal question, except when alone, and not then, unless encouraged to do so.

"Let me recall a Sunday at Beckenham Rectory. In the morning we attended the village church. In the afternoon many young men from Addiscombe came over. They sat, or walked about, in the garden, and went up one by one to Miss Marsh's sitting room. In the evening we all walked to the Barn where the meeting was held. It was inspiring and uplifting to hear her speak. It was characteristic of her that she always seemed the same, always heavenly-minded, and in the spirit of prayer. Her conversational powers were brilliant, and her stories of her own and other's experiences were fresh and telling. I never met any one who was so absolutely ready to help. I was once talking to her at Feltwell of her long and useful life, and of how she must dwell on the past with pleasure, as well as gratitude. 'Oh, no,' she said, 'never on the

¹ Youngest daughter of the first Earl of Gainsborough, afterwards the wife of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, Bart.

past, there is so much to regret ; but always on the glorious future.' " ¹

During the time that she was making friends with the navvies, and the men of the Army Works Corps, Catherine Marsh had kept a journal. She had lent it to a few of her friends, and one of them was the Rev. Charles Kingsley, who wrote when returning it :

" I have at last found time to read your MSS. navy epic ! I only wish I had read it before. I do not choose to pay you compliments which you certainly would not desire to accept : this much I will say that it drew tears from me, as it did from the men ; and that I have not for many a day read of any work so human, so healthy, and therefore so truly Christian. I enter into no comments, I wish no word altered, no fact not to have happened—and what can one say more ? The seed has been sown ; there may be frosts and blights : but if the natural plant can endure frosts and blights, and yet after all bear a fair crop at harvest, how much more the spiritual and divine one ? I am all but a High Calvinist in my secret suspicion that the heart which has once surrendered itself to God, can never utterly fall from Him, but He knows best about that. In any case you have not lived in vain, and what more need any one of us to say. I make no comments. The whole MSS. has gone too near my heart to allow me to talk about it."

Those who read her navy journal urged the publication of parts of it, that others might share in the interest it had given them. About this there was at first a little conflict of opinion between Caroline Maitland and Henry Sherer. Miss Maitland doubted if it would be altogether wise, while Henry Sherer was strongly in favour of it. Caroline Maitland's letter, to which the next is Catherine Marsh's reply, has not been found.

" *Beckenham, July 24th, 1857.*—My Car, I will not say your letter was not a terror to me ! But, of course, I love

¹ Taken from an " In Memoriam " sketch of Catherine Marsh, in *Time and Talents* for April, 1913.

you all the better for your dear, true kindness. But—I asked God about it for many long months, and He said to me through five people, ‘do it’—and these five were men who know navy men well. But none of them know them as I do. Nobody can understand them as I do. I believe they are too independently simple to be made vain, of that I feel sure. They know they are looked down on, as a class, and are grateful for every effort to put them straight with other people. The men themselves who are written about (save William Gregory) are almost all *beyond* getting the book, in wild distant parts of the earth—or, in Heaven. And lastly, they never buy books! Only one man that I have yet met, or heard of, has bought the Memorials of our Hedley, though 4,000 adored his character, and numbers went on pilgrimage to his grave, and brought me sketches and relics of it. The navy is never seen near a bookstall at a railway station. Here is William Gregory’s¹ answer, I like its honesty. In reply to my enquiry whether it would be likely to promote vanity in any of the men, he wrote: ‘Dear Madam,—You ask me what I think would be the effect of publishing an account of your intercourse with the navvies, whether it would be likely to promote vanity? I cannot see how it could in any one but yourself; and I hope and believe, not that.’ Another former navy of whom I asked whether he thought, should they ever be aware of it, that it would annoy, or pain them, replied, ‘As far as I can say, they would feel a pleasure in your care that they should be put straighter with other people.’ And Frederick Chalmers who had known the men, said the same. Read Henry Sherer’s letter about it, and then listen to me. That good Dr. Guthrie beseeches me to publish the navy book, to do for them, by God’s grace, what his plea for Ragged schools has done for them.

“Now will you notice if anything in the MSS. exalts self, and if there is, *cut it out*. I want to exalt Jesus Christ,—and my navy men a *little* too. Alter, and blame as much as you think right, and I will thank you for it.”

¹ For many years a navy, and later a valued Scripture Reader.

Another friend who looked forward to the book was Sir Henry Lawrence. He wrote to her from Mount Aboo on October 3rd, 1856:

"I hope you have had all success in your advocacy of the poor navvies' case. We shall be glad to get a copy of your book about them. Your note found me on my travels; not very pleasant ones, at this season, often across pathless Deserts and Jungles. There were however pleasant *patches*, moral and physical, in my way, for I am a Despot over Despots, and can open the doors of prisons at will. At Bhurtpoor, (the large city near Agra, which was a sort of Sebastopol to us Indians fifty, and again thirty years ago,) I released fifty prisoners who were imprisoned for terms of years for an affray; many of them being little more guilty than your navvies. My visits are generally to the Palace and the Prison in the same day; frequently I go from one straight to the other."

On the first Sunday in 1858, at Catherine Marsh's evening meeting in the barn, two young men were sitting side by side on a bench near her. One of them was a guest ¹ who was staying at the Rectory; the other was Thomas Ward, a navvy working on the new railway. Her appeal that the love of Christ should constrain each one to live *henceforth*, from that very hour, not to themselves, but to Him Who died for them, met with a response in the hearts of those two, which made that night's decision the turning-point in their lives. Some months later when Mr. Jocelyn was again at Beckenham he told her that just as the wish to come to Christ that night came into his heart, he caught sight of the earnest look on the handsome face of the man beside him, and felt as if the same desire must be in his heart also. Mr. Jocelyn never swerved from the path on which he set out that Sunday night. He was in the Diplomatic Service, and was then at the Court of Hanover, where he at once began to care for the souls of the English workmen, and about twenty of them used to come to a service which he made for them every Sunday evening.

¹ The Hon. Nassau Jocelyn, youngest son of the third Earl of Roden.

Thomas Ward had a short but singularly bright Christian career, until he met with a terrible accident, and died from the effects of it a few weeks later.¹

On the 9th of May, the first Sunday after Thomas Ward's death, the meeting was crowded with navvies who were eager to hear all she could tell them of their comrade.

Not long after, Thomas Ward's mate, Moses, better known as "Curly," sent her this message: "Tell her, from this time I have done with sin by God's help, and I am going to live as Ward did." Before he left Beckenham he and another man, who lodged with him, came to the Sacramental meeting, which she had occasionally, telling her that they were coming the next Sunday to the Holy Communion, as they "were determined to live for God." Several more of the navvies, told her that Thomas Ward's funeral day was the beginning of a new life for them. One of them named Robert Salmon came to bid her good-bye, and when she asked if he was going away before Sunday, he said, "Well, no, I don't think I can, though I ought to. But I do so want to see you turn over a few of the leaves of that new book." She replied, "I hope the Bible is not a new book, but an old friend to you, as it is to me." "Oh, but I mean the new one we are a-going to give you," he said eagerly, then after a moment's reflection he became aware how deeply he had committed himself, and exclaimed, "Oh, dear, dear, what shall I do? Why, I wasn't to have said a word about it." So, taking no notice of his exclamation she skilfully turned the conversation to some less dangerous subject.

The secret came out that evening, when four of the foremen of the railway works came to the Rectory, bringing a beautiful Bible for her, as a present from the men.

The doctor, who did all in his power to save Thomas Ward's life, refused to receive any fee, and in doing this, he wrote to Catherine Marsh:

"The debt I owe you I can never repay; you have taught me to know that I have a Saviour, our Blessed

¹ The story of his short life is told in her little book, *A Light for the Line*. Nisbet & Co., London.

Lord Jesus Christ. I have been a miserable sinner, but He will wash me clean in His Blood, and give me a new heart and a new life. God forbid I should ever return to my old state of sin, I feel so happy with my new life in Him. I think of poor Thomas Ward, I say poor—but he is rich now in his Saviour's love. When I saw the sudden change in his face, that heavenly look that came over it when he said, 'I see Him now,' I only wished that every poor soul could have seen it, for it would have made them Christians. I trust it will never be erased from my memory, and I thank God I was permitted to witness it. I hope you will always consider me at your service either to attend the sick, or in any way I can serve you."

When another navvy came to wish her good-bye the following conversation took place. Catherine Marsh said, "Have you made your choice yet, are you going to live for God?"

"Why, no, I think a man wants a call from God to do that."

"But God is calling you now, by my voice."

"Yes, but I know a good deal about these things. I've seen hundreds, I may say thousands, of men trying to live for God; and always failing."

"And they will always fail, if they only *try*, and do not *pray* for the Holy Spirit's help. If they ask this, God's Word is pledged—that He will 'give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.' Now, we will ask Him," and she knelt down, and prayed: he knelt too, and when they rose she said, "Now you have prayed," but he quickly said, "No, you have prayed." "But you have said Amen, so you joined in the prayer." He looked up with a bright smile quite pleased to discover this, and said, "Well, so I did."

"Then, George, would you not like to begin a new life, to live for God, to-day?"

"That I should. They're the happiest who do so; I know that." He was silent for a minute, and then said, "Nobody ever spoke so kind to me in all my poor sad young life, as you have in this half hour, for I can scarce

remember my Mother, who died when I was eight years old—and drink has been the ruin of my life.”

“Then,” she replied, “by God’s grace you will leave it off from this hour.”

“Well, I’ll try, and thank ye kindly.”

Haymaking was going on, so employment in it was found for George, which enabled him to stay for a time at Beckenham, to be strengthened in his new life.

A navy who had been at work in London, met her in the road, and said that he wished she had been there too, for the landlord of the public-house where he lodged, was dying and “right frightened and miserable.” She took the address, and going at once to the station, caught a train just leaving for London; then choosing a cab with a horse that she thought looked like a fleet one, she was speeding on her errand of mercy when the cab suddenly stopped at the corner of the street; the cabman got down from the box, and looking anxiously at her, said, “Lady, forgive me, but I don’t think you can know the sort of place you told me to drive to—those low public-houses are very dangerous places.” “Thank you,” she replied, “for your good advice; but I should like to ask you a question. If you had been told that there was a dying man in that house, in terror of death, and without any hope, and you knew of a message that could take away his fear, and give him instead a thankful heart, and a happy prospect—would you go to him?” “Oh, if that’s it, it’s all right,” he answered, “but many a one don’t know the dangers of such places.” At the door of the public-house, the fatherly cabman said in a low voice, “It’s a very bad neighbourhood, so I shall wait near till you come out, and I shan’t charge you for waiting.” The visit was paid, and hope seemed to dawn for the hopeless man, with the message of pardon from Him Who said, “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth,”—none too far off for that Divine Voice of mercy to reach them.

The cabman looked quite relieved to see her return safely, and listened with great interest to all she told him.

It was almost impossible to get him to take the payment for his waiting time, and he only yielded when she told him that she would be hurt if he refused it.

Not long after *A Light for the Line* had been published, Catherine Marsh had the following letter from the daughter of a clergyman in Lancashire :

“ Will you forgive a stranger’s intrusion on your precious time ? A few days since *A Light for the Line* came into my hands, and after reading it, I put it into my young Brother’s hands, with heartfelt, but half-believing prayer, that our Father would bless it to his soul. The answer is glorious. He has ever been all we could wish, except *the one thing needful*. I am very little his senior, and now through you we are bound together in a new relationship which death cannot touch, and Heaven will make perfect. My steps have for months been tending towards the grave, and my brother said, though he felt a strong reluctance to reading a religious book, yet he could not refuse me, and he thought ‘ it was only a little thing and he should soon get it over ’ ; but at the end of the second chapter, the appeal to young men touched his heart, and he felt its truth—then the dying witness fixed it there, *Jesus Christ for him*. Oh, how can we ever thank you ! Farewell, much-loved though unseen friend. If in the world to which I am fast approaching, spirits can be sent by their Saviour on errands of love to the Church Militant may it often be my errand to minister to you.”

English Hearts and English Hands was published at Christmas. Catherine Marsh sent a copy to the Archbishop, and he replied :

“ *Addington, December 30th, 1857.*—I am very ungrateful for having hitherto neglected to thank you for your delightful *romance*, but my excuse must be its own interesting contents which have been found so captivating that I have only yesterday been able to get it into my hands. It does indeed contain remarkable instances of Divine grace of which you have been made the happy instrument, and I thought of you this morning, as we read in the family,

‘What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.’ I doubt whether you see the *English Churchman*, so I send you an extract which will be gratifying, and show that you are not the only person who can duly estimate *English Hearts and English Hands!* However, if the Navvies are to be Deacons, I think you should be the Archbishop.”

With the rapid circulation of her books she became widely known. Only those who were living at the time can have any idea of the effect they produced. In them was revealed unimagined instances of fine character, and fine conduct amongst the working classes, and the soldiers of our country and they also showed what an amount of good might be done amongst them by faith in God, and by sympathy with them. By these books she gave a lead which has since been followed by many who, in the same spirit of sympathy, have found for themselves new and varied lines of work in which to devote their lives to the good of others. In a little sketch of her life and character written¹ shortly after her death, something of the feeling called forth by her books, is well described :

“From the publication of *English Hearts and English Hands* came the founding of the Navy Mission, which has now half a century of splendid work to its record; and through that book the name of Catherine Marsh became a household word. The *Memorials* of Captain Vicars had had an enormous circulation. The British Army was not then considered as part of the Church Militant here on earth. The story of Hedley Vicars, his courage—which has always been the heritage of the British soldier—equally in the field, in the hospital, and in the immediate presence of death, influenced the minds of the public in a new direction, and these memorials of one who was the centre of so much that was highest in the Army before Sebastopol may truly be said to have powerfully affected the position of the Army in the nation.

“But above and beyond her many works with the pen,

¹ By Lady Frances Balfour, in *The British Weekly*.

was the power of her personal influence. It was an 'arresting' power; the most worldly could not but be moved by the benignant presence, the absorbing desire to gather in 'such as shall be saved.' Far and near she travelled at the call of those who were heavy-laden in mind, and she had the power of bringing light out of darkness. 'The love of Christ constraineth us' was the watch-word of her lips, and she had the vision of what it meant to the sinner who needed a Saviour, and to the saint who longed for Heaven and Home."

It was a testing time for Catherine Marsh, and unconsciously she had prepared herself to meet it by her prayer to be kept from vanity. Whatever others might think of her, and of what she had done, she always took a very humble view of herself, and of her work. One of her characteristics was that she almost always regretted everything she had done! She would think that either she ought to have done it in some different way, or else that she had better not have done it at all! A physiognomist who chanced to see her, for a few minutes only, at a friend's house, looked at her earnestly and then said, "Oh, poor lady, you will always be full of regrets," and he was right.

There was a long review in *The Guardian* from which the following short extract is taken:

"These navvies, what have we known about them? How often have we passed their stalwart groups—how few of us have taken the trouble to enquire what sort of hearts beat under those grim forms—what steps, or whether any, have been taken to claim them as real members of our common brotherhood—in short, who cares for their bodies and who cares for their souls! The Author has had rare opportunities, and has made a noble use of them. A gang of navvies in connection with the Crystal Palace works, invades her peaceful quarters, and a most formidable army it is. Our heroine accepts battle in a higher strength than her own. For the story of her conquest we must refer our readers to the book; for ourselves we scarcely know which to admire most—her undaunted courage and

consummate skill in action; or her admirable method of writing her despatches."

The two letters which follow are taken from the numbers that reached her, merely to show the effect of this book on different minds.

Lord Carnwath to C.M.:

"*Heidelberg, January 15th, 1858.*—*Hearts and Hands* are making a great impression. I want you to permit my friend 'Le Chevalier Bunsen' to translate it into German. Himself and his family are deeply interested in the book, and in the Authoress, they can scarcely keep their eyes dry while reading it. Mademoiselle Bunsen called yesterday with an entreaty from the Chevalier that I would pay him an early visit, so impatient is he to ask all sorts of questions about you, and the work. He thinks the book¹ will make a most favourable impression in Germany. I am of the same opinion. The Bunsens are longing to know you. I shall give them a letter of introduction. They are clever, agreeable, excellent people."

From a stranger who addressed his letter "To the lady who wrote the *Life of Captain Hedley Vicars*":

"Dear Lady,—Through the kindness of a friend in a bookseller's shop, I have lately read your new book *English Hearts and English Hands*, and think myself fortunate to get a look at it, and, dear lady, please let me offer you my own, and my little family's warmest thanks for the pleasure, and we trust profit, we felt we have gained in the reading of it. I see you say it is not written for the working classes, which, will you let me tell you, I am sorry for, for it seems to tell we must not expect a cheap edition of this work, which seems a pity, for the examples of goodness amongst working-men which you have written of would do so much good amongst us. There is so much help in good example, and the stories of what has been done by folk of our own class will cheer, and by God's help, strengthen us to do something like it. I do hope you may be able to have a cheap edition printed for us, like that of that good Christ's soldier, and good Queen's

¹ It was translated into German.

soldier, Captain Vicars. We have a little lending library in our workshop—and we bought that book as soon as the cheap edition came out, and I believe it has not been in hardly a day since, and I hope all the boys and men on the place will read it in time. I heard one man say it ought to be read through once a quarter to tell us to keep in the right way. Let one more working-man, dear lady, heartily thank you for your kindness and good deeds to his fellows, and let him join them in asking God's favour and blessing upon you, and upon your work.—ROWLAND WHEELER."

To this letter Catherine Marsh sent a prompt reply, a copy of the wished-for book, and the promise of a cheap edition to be published shortly. With equal promptness Rowland Wheeler sent the price of the book—which was straightway returned to him, and the next letter is his reply :

"Dear Lady,—Your open-handed, and warm-hearted kindness to me a stranger to you, makes me ashamed of my close and lukewarm feelings and doings to my friends and neighbours. I did not like to see the price come back. I wish I had told you to put it to one of the many good purposes you have in hand; but with it I will buy some of your little books and cards of prayer; and shall give them away as from you. Let me again thank you for your goodness to me and all working men.—ROWLAND WHEELER."

Henry Sherer wrote to her on *January 18th, 1858* : "I thought the notice of *English Hearts* in *The Times* valuable. It shows the editor thought it a popular book. I hope that Miss Maitland and others are satisfied that it was best to publish it, and that good by God's blessing will result. The extension of *sympathy* is the immediate good I anticipate."

After the book was written, Caroline Maitland gave it her hearty approval. To her Catherine Marsh wrote :

"I am so glad you had a second cheer from that navvy book. The best thing of all is that it has begun to make some people work for God, who did not before. To-day

there came a letter from a man who is in the ironworks in South Wales, where the great strike has been. He writes, 'Madam, if you will send me some advice, I will strive to follow it. If you will send me some cards of prayer, I will pay the expense, and give them amongst the colliers. For, Madam, your three books have made a great change in me by God's grace. *Captain Vicars* and *The Victory Won* made me seek my salvation through Christ, and *Hearts and Hands* has made me wish to seek that of others.' The letter is written in a firm, strong, manly hand. God grant he may come out a great missionary for these colliers for whom I have been praying a good deal of late."

Early in January, 1858, Catherine Marsh and her niece went to Rugby, to stay with the Rev. Leonard and Mrs. Burrows for the baptism of their first child. Mrs. Burrows was Mary Vicars, and her little son ¹ was to have the name of her beloved brother, as well as her husband's.

From Rugby they went to Bridgnorth, and wherever Catherine Marsh went she did her best to bring at least a gleam of sunshine into some shady place. The next letter, to Lady Rayleigh, tells how she did this, for workers in a carpet factory :—

"While waiting for the train at Oxford, I seize the moment to write and tell you how much Lucy and I enjoyed our visit to the happy home at Rugby and seeing dearest Mary's delight in her darling Baby. Then at Bridgnorth we gave a tea-party to the factory women and girls, 179 in all, and it *was* pleasant to see the old and haggard faces (on figures of from 15 to 25 years of age !) light up with innocent happiness even for one evening in their dreary lives. Dear young creatures, my heart yearned for them to get that faith which would shed a light from Heaven even through the dreariness of factory life."

C. M. to Lady Caroline Calcraft :

"Your letter was most comforting; for nothing but the hope, the faith, that God will bless the effort to the saving, or the helping of souls carries me through, and

¹ Leonard Hedley, now Bishop of Sheffield.

out of, and over, all the conflict of feelings which the publication of those books caused me. Already I have had several cheering tokens of God's good will touching my new little book, and three such tokens last week touching Hedley's Life, so I hope it is right for me to have sent them forth. I should have written sooner, but when you know that still I have 110 letters unanswered, you will forgive me, and will you tell our Georgy through what a slough of despond about my letters I am wading. That young navvy, William Radcliffe, who was falsely imprisoned—till his 'alibi' was established,—was crushed to death in a moment between an engine and carts on the Birkenhead Line, on the 7th of this month. *His* was the only letter (of 95 then) I had time to answer on the last day of the year. He said 'he felt *dull*, no one to care for his soul, so it got cold.' I wrote back, 'Oh then, dear William, care for others' souls. In speaking of Jesus Christ to them, you will find your heart warm back to Him.' The night after he had my letter, he got several mates to come to his lodging, and he read the Bible, and Hedley's *Memorials* to them, and did the same every night till his last on earth. One of his mates, Thomas Brammar writes, '100 men followed him to his grave, and never a one, big or little but had tears in his eyes. Everybody on earth loved William, and I believe he was loved by his Saviour in Heaven.' I too had 'tears in my eyes,' for I also loved that bright, grateful young William.

"*Did you send English Hearts to Charles Dickens!* How dear of you to think it worth sending to him. Oh, sometimes pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all those '*English Hearts*' that are still beating upon this earth."

This autumn Catherine Marsh was asked by Colonel Martin, the Governor of Preston Gaol, if she could come again to address the prisoners, as she had done once before when staying in the neighbourhood with Mrs. ffarrington at Worden Hall, and as she and her niece were going to

stay there again on their way to Scotland, she readily complied with his wish.

At the gaol she was welcomed by the officials and warders with friendly smiles, and was conducted to the first gallery, overlooking a long corridor in which the 262 men and boy prisoners were assembled. She spoke to them, first telling them of Thomas Ward's dying message. "Tell all you meet, Jesus Christ for every man." Then she read the story of the prodigal son from St. Luke xv., and as she told them of the Heavenly Father's love towards them the hardened faces softened, with one exception, a soldier's of the 22nd regiment; but when one full heart burst the bond of silence imposed by prison discipline, and a voice, broken with sobs, cried aloud, "Oh, God, help us, do, do, help us!" the proud-looking young soldier coloured crimson, and hid his face in his hands, and a poor little boy, looking about ten years old, cried bitterly.

It was almost more than her heart could bear—and yet, as she then told them, "I have come from my home to see many beloved friends, but the hardest thing to give up, if I had been prevented coming North, would have been this visit to you, with the hope that the Holy Spirit would bring the message of forgiveness and peace through Jesus Christ, home to your hearts in your trouble and your solitude."

Afterwards she spoke to the women prisoners, and Colonel Martin gave leave that each one in the prison should have a soldier's prayer from her.

On Sunday after being at the Morning Service and the Holy Communion, she addressed a gathering of about 400 people in the large school-room, and in the evening the household at Worden asked if she would give them an address, which she did.

The next visit was to Aldcliffe Hall, near Lancaster, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, strangers to her, but their daughter, Mary, after reading *English Hearts and English Hands*, had written an earnest request that if she came into their neighbourhood she would come to speak to a number of masons, builders, and others, amongst whom she

had been working since reading that book. On the evening of her arrival she found a large room, filled with these men, to whom she gave her Heavenly Master's message.

The next day she went with Miss Dawson and her sisters to a large silk manufactory, one of the Managers having sent to beg she would come and speak to the "Hands" employed in their Mill, about 200 men, women, boys and girls. They came in, with faces of stolid indifference, but when she had spoken a little while of the Crystal City, and of the delights which were prepared for all who would come to the Saviour of the world, and of her longing to meet them there, the indifference vanished, an eager interest took its place and they all joined heartily in singing, "There is a Land of pure delight." Then she shook hands with those in the front row, and asked them "to let it go round!" But they were not content with this, so she found them standing in long lines, in the yard outside the mill, resolved that each one should get a shake-hands. Some of the men had begun a little prayer meeting, and the leader of it told her of this as she bade him good-bye, adding that they had never had more than fifteen who were willing to join in it, but that what he heard said, since her address, showed him that he might expect forty at the next meeting.

After leaving the Mill they went to Lancaster Castle, where there were forty-five women prisoners. The Chaplain was absent, and the Constable did not venture to invite her to address the prisoners without his leave. But he asked her to go to each cell, to have a few words alone with each prisoner. One poor girl had been more sinned against than sinning, in the small theft for which she was there. When the door was locked, as Catherine Marsh left the cell, she heard her sobbing as if her heart would break, so she begged to be allowed to go back to tell her that she should never want a friend, that she would find a place for her when she was free, and left her comforted, the Sub-Matron promising to write when the time for her release came.

After a short visit to the Bishop of Carlisle and Mrs.

Waldegrave at Rose Castle, they were met at Carlisle Station by Mrs. Head of Rickerby, Miss Braithwaite, and Miss Whately, daughter of the Archbishop of Dublin, all of them strangers to Catherine Marsh; but they met her, to tell her how greatly they rejoiced in what she had been enabled to do in God's service, and to bid her God-speed; and she was greatly refreshed by their hearty Christian sympathy.

She enjoyed crossing the Border with an ever-fresh zest. At Lockerbie Station a friend had brought her old manservant, whose great wish was "to see the lady who wrote the good books he loved." There was just time for her to say a few words and give him a book, before the train went on, and he was left beaming with pleasure, grasping her gift.

A few pleasant days were spent at Moffat, then a primitive little watering-place, with her friends Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Stewart and their family, who had chosen Moffat for their holiday quarters and were entertaining there a large party of young friends of their children, Charles, Hartie¹ and Christina.² These were days of comparative rest, the mornings spent in writing, the afternoons in long drives among the bare mountains where the Covenanters sought refuge from Claverhouse and his soldiers in the days of persecution. In the evening the young people gathered round her sometimes to ask her questions, but more often to listen to her charming true stories. She took every opportunity of speaking with them on the theme dearest to her heart. One of the guests said at the close of the evening, that she had not prayed for years, but that she would begin again that night; and Christina Stewart told her that since she had been to Beckenham Rectory, she had given up going to the Opera, though she was very fond of music, because she found she "could not feel so happy, nor pray so comfortably, nor teach her class of wild boys so well, if she went to it." There were other

¹ Afterwards Baroness de Klenck.

² Twice married. Her second husband was George Steevens, the brilliant War Correspondent.

encouragements in this visit, and the friendship with that family was strengthened, and it knew no change.

They paid other visits to old friends, but a first visit to strangers stands out with clear remembrance. Lady Kintore had told Lady Erroll about Catherine Marsh, and while she and her niece were at Keith Hall, Lady Erroll wrote to ask if they would come next to Slains Castle. There were several other guests there, and by them, as well as by Lord and Lady Erroll, Catherine Marsh was welcomed, and all she had to tell was listened to with an earnest attention and an often expressed wish to hear more; while to the beautiful young hostess it was the beginning of a new life, making her in earnest in her desire for others to have the same blessing, an earnestness which from that time onward never slackened. She went with Catherine Marsh to the fishing villages, and the meetings in them—first held by her—were carried on after she left; and great blessing came to the fishermen and their wives and children. Other visits were paid, and in all of them there was work prepared for her which she could not refuse.

Lady Erroll to C.M. :

“We are delighted with your dear letter of true and loving counsel; its principal point, ‘the utter surrender of ourselves to God, as the first step in the race Homewards.’ The memory of your visit rests upon us all like a dew of refreshing, and we delight in recalling the different and happy events and incidents connected with it. We went to Whynnyfold yesterday, and heard on all sides blessings and thanks for her who had been so earnest in pressing the good news of the Gospel upon them. Our Doctor is reading with great interest your gift of *English Hearts and Hands*. I do think that under God’s mercy, your visit has been blessed to us all. I went to our sick servant’s room to-day, and read the 23rd Psalm, and said a prayer which he followed earnestly. He asked me to say how much he felt your kindness in coming to speak to, and pray with him, and he said he would so much have liked to be up, to wait on you !”

Before Catherine Marsh left Scotland, the strain of the life she was now living had begun to tell upon her health. She never gave an address without throwing her whole heart into the words she spoke : and when she was seeking to win an individual soul, no effort was too great, by speaking, by writing, and above all by fervent prayer, to gain that soul for Christ.

On the way home, they stayed at Exton Park in Rutlandshire, for Lady Gainsborough, and her young daughter, Lady Victoria Noel, had set their hearts on her coming to speak in the great hall there. Then she intended to go to Cambridge to see Mrs. Sherer and her son, who had had a long illness. But now she heard from him that he had been sent to Lowestoft. He wrote :

“ This relapse has, of course, clouded my hopes of ultimate recovery, but I can trust God, *and my Saviour* with my future.” (And the three words underlined told her that the answer to her years of prayer for him had come.)

It was the end of October when they reached home, and it soon became evident that she was suffering from more than ordinary fatigue. The pain in her head had kept increasing, quite preventing her from reading or writing. Mr. Skey,¹ who was sent for, told her the only remedy was to give up all her work, and take a three-months' rest. The danger feared was paralysis.

On the day of Mr. Skey's visit, she had the following letter from Henry Sherer :

“ *November 3rd, 1858.*—Next to the Bible, I think old John Bunyan's ‘ Come and welcome to Jesus Christ,’ has helped me most. I hope if I live to see you again, we shall be able to commune freely of the way of Peace, and of Him who is our Peace,—I never could before. Best love to all at Beckenham Rectory. It is a beloved home, and your dear honoured Father's presence sheds a halo around it. Continue to pray for me. I could not stand a moment without the Spirit's help. From down in the depths I look up to Him Who bore our sins in His own Body on the tree, and *I dare not* doubt His power, nor His will,

¹ F. C. Skey, Esq., President of the College of Surgeons.

to pardon even me. Write to me as often as you can, your letters are a great help and comfort."

This was his last letter.

She, whom he loved, longed to go at once to be with him, but she also was ill, and now unable even to leave her bed. On November 26th, Mrs. Sherer sent this telegram : "Dear Henry died in the night at ten minutes past twelve o'clock."

In that night, when Henry Sherer was dying, there was little sleep for Catherine Marsh. In thought she was beside him, saying words for his comfort. Several weeks afterwards, the faithful servant who had nursed him came to see her, and told her that in that night Mr. Sherer said that "Miss Marsh had come, and spoken to him."

In the enforced rest her health was gradually restored, and now her thoughts became much occupied about the great Revival which had begun in America. On the last night of 1858, in preparing the subjects for prayer in 1859, she wrote : "May we see a great revival of religion throughout the whole country, and in all our Queen's Dominions." She also added a prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the members of the Universities, and of the learned professions, and wrote, to be specially remembered, the names of four barristers and of seven doctors. Then there was a prayer for "the Editor, and other writers in *The Times*, and that its vast influence might be used for God."

It may be well to mention here, that while she took the deepest interest in the Revival, prayed fervently for its increase, and rejoiced in its good success, yet she never adopted any of the methods of the different workers in it, in the purpose to which her life was devoted, of winning souls for Christ. One who had known her from his childhood wrote :

"Brought up in a very narrow corner of the religious world of the sixties and seventies, it seemed to me when I was young as if to be religious meant to have dowdy clothes, and long faces, and to object to anything beautiful or amusing. Miss Marsh's whole personality was in strongest

contrast to all this. She fully understood the right use of beautiful surroundings, and the wonderful radiance in her face and her voice told even a child of the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit."

The same impression must have been made on the writer of the next letter, when Catherine Marsh had stayed for the first time in her house :

"It is a great blessing to see religion pictured so *real* as you ever delight to describe and recommend it. To me it seemed one of your most blessed gifts, your power of showing to others this view of it, making them wish to have it themselves."

The Bishop of Ohio, Dr. McIlvaine, and his daughter Nain, had been staying at Beckenham Rectory, and from them Catherine Marsh heard much about the wonderful effects of the Revival. After their return to America, the Bishop wrote to tell her that he had carried out the commission she asked him to undertake. She had given into his care a sum of money to be spent in sending copies of the Memorials of Captain Vicars, to the different Military Colleges in America. He wrote :

"It will purchase 160 copies and I am placing them in the best hands I know of, for the wisest distribution." Then he added : "There is nothing in our whole absence from home that my daughter and I value more, or shall love more to think or speak of, than our visit to Beckenham. Our hearts were fed, warmed, taught, enlivened, humbled, there—the remembrance is 'the sunny side.'"

"The work of Revival continues, God has sent this blessing to us, when amongst our political men there is all that tends to dishonour our civil institutions; but recently the work of grace has reached some of the very worst holds of mob violence, and political corruption."

In a later letter he told that, "the Revival was still vigorous and its fruits were good";¹ and he mentioned

¹ "The practical results of the Revival in America were seen three years later. When the Civil War broke out, magnificent work for both the bodies and souls of men was done in the contending armies, very largely by men who had been blessed during the Revival season."—*History of the Church Missionary Society*, by Eugene Stock, Vol. II. p. 32.

that in one of the Churches he had just visited he found 58 new communicants added to the former number, 185, out of a congregation of about 600 grown-up people.

She received many letters from America telling of the blessing her books had been to numbers on that side of the Atlantic. One lady wrote from Columbus, Ohio : " There have never been any books which have awakened such intense interest among the Christian women of this country, as yours have done. We rise from the perusal of them, with the purpose deepened to ' go, and do likewise.' "

Mr. James Saville wrote to her from Boston : " The story of Captain Vickers' life is speaking to thousands, and tens of thousands, calling us all home to Jesus Christ "; and such testimonies greatly cheered her.

Her longing for the Revival increased with the accounts from the North of Ireland, and from different parts of Scotland and Wales, where the manifest effects of the Holy Spirit's work shown in the changed lives of those whose hearts He had filled, were too remarkable to be passed over in silence by the public Press.¹

In these years of her life her day was a long one. She rose early to secure quiet time for prayer and for reading the Bible ; she read it diligently, marking texts and writing on the margin. Her marginal notes were personal—never critical, often just the feeling of the moment. For instance, in Psalm lxxxii. 12, after the words " they walked in their own counsels," she wrote, " Oh, may we never," and after the sentence, " with honey out of the rock should

¹ The Rev. Dr. Massie's letter to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland : " The catholic unity promoted by the Revival in the Province of Ulster is extraordinary. The united prayer-meetings combine all sects in hallowed friendship. Never was so little political partizanship or personal rancour exhibited. Roman Catholics have acknowledged this."

The Rev. Maurice Day, Incumbent of St. Matthias's Church, Belfast, tells of the moral effects : " The moral change in the Protestant population seems to keep pace with the religious movement. Drunkenness has almost disappeared from among them. Quietness and peace have taken the place of party strife.

" Even Roman Catholics are standing in awe of the movement, and many of them have professed conversion."—From *The Times* of October 4, 1859.

I have satisfied thee," in the last verse, she wrote : " How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds."

" Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills the breast."

Or, she would grasp a promise thus, beside the 19th verse of Psalm lxxxix. she has underlined the words, " I have laid help upon One that is mighty," and on the margin she wrote, " Feb. 20th, 1871, for the 1,500 copies of H.V. to get into Paris now." It was a French translation of the Memorials she had sent for the soldiers at the ending of the siege of Paris.

Then again she would adapt a prayer thus—by the 11th verse of Psalm lxxix : " Hear the sighing of the prisoners, and loose those who are appointed to death," she wrote, " for Gordon, Power and Stewart, if they are still alive." The Bible to her was as a Heavenly letter, or a Divine voice, and her prayer was the answering voice to its messages, a communing with her God.

Breakfast was a cheerful meal; the morning post often brought some new work for her to do, and all the family shared her interests. At meal-times her conversation was full of charm whatever the topic might happen to be, and she enjoyed the amusing side of life, with her keen sense of humour, and her appreciation of it in others. She had a ready way of saying pleasant things. Thus, when dining at the Deanery of Westminster, while Richard Chenevix Trench was the Dean, the conversation turned upon poets and poetry; and she said she did not care for Milton's. With a surprised and almost displeased look, the Dean asked her, " Then whose poems *do* you care about ? " and his displeasure changed into an amused smile as she replied : " *I think* it is those of the Author of ' Poems from Eastern Sources ! ' " ¹ Her copy of this book contains many pencil marks.

She eagerly followed the course of public events as told in *The Times*, and with additional interest after her

¹ *Poems from Eastern Sources*, by Richard Chenevix Trench, published in 1842.

friendship with Mr. Delane had begun; there was a point in which they had a strong fellow-feeling for each other, her devotion to her father, his to his mother. After her death, he wrote in answer to Catherine Marsh's letter of understanding sympathy :

" In the case of most men of my age, the necessary calls of life tend to separate mothers and sons, until, from no fault perhaps on either side, the maternal tie dwindles into a mere sentiment. My case was happily exceptional. My mother and I lived as the most attached friends. When we were not together, we maintained a constant and animated correspondence. Much, therefore, hung upon a single life, and I feel as if a huge gap indeed was left in that small inside world the joys of which are the only consolation for the toils, and anxieties of one's outside existence."

To go on with a sketch of her day at home : the morning was occupied in writing letters, unless she had a book on hand, then the first hours were always given to it. The apparent ease in the style of her writing was the result of much care and patience. She would ask her niece to read aloud what she had just written, and then she was her own severe critic—the doubtful passages would be written over and over again, thought about, prayed about, and at the end of all her painstaking she found it difficult to be satisfied. " That must be changed," " that is too *teachy*," or " Oh, no, that will never do, it is just like a tract ! " were the sentences she often passed upon herself. In the afternoon there were visitors to be received, calls to be returned, sick and sorrowful ones to be sought and helped; and when she was at home she never missed her three o'clock meeting once a week in the parlour of old Mrs. Muggridge's cottage at Elmers End, where she first began her work in Beckenham. During all this time she carried on her meetings in the Barn; and she was constantly in demand to speak in all sorts of places, and to all sorts of people, once in a railway arch in Kentish Town, used as a workshop, and roughly fitted up with planks, to some 300 working-men and their wives. Another evening was spent in a large hall in Stepney, where the

crowded gathering of men, women, and children included 120 chimney-sweeps. In the ragged school in Whitechapel she spoke loving words to hundreds of the poor little scholars, and the children clustered round her afterwards, many of them saying they *would* come to Jesus, the tender Shepherd of the lambs. Her heart went out with pity and sympathy for the poor careworn workers, and she thankfully went at their call, to tell them of the Divine Love which could light up the darkness of their present life of toil, by the bright hope of the future of everlasting joy, which He had prepared for them, and now offered them. Again, requests would come from a gathering of policemen, or from a number of young dressmakers, and shop assistants, or the members of a working men's institute.

But the call to help a single soul found her equally ready, whether it came from a hospital bed, a workhouse ward, or from one of England's stately homes. A telegram reached her from one of these, asking her if she was in London to visit a dying lady. It was followed by this letter: "Forgive the liberty I have taken. I would give more than I can express if you could speak to my friend." She was at Brighton when the telegram reached her, but she went by the next train to London, was welcomed in the home of the dying one, and was able to send good news to the anxious friend.

Now, wherever she went, she found meetings were arranged for her by her friends, or by strangers. Yet it was not without effort that she spoke at these large gatherings, and often not without a measure of suffering from severe headache which followed on the strain of giving an address in hot and crowded rooms.

The claims of new friends, new work, and new interests seemed to enlarge her heart so that she could take them all in, without parting with those already there. Writers, thinkers, and workers of many different shades of opinion and character were drawn to her as if by magnetism, and some who had taken up a prejudice against her could not resist the spell of her personality when they met her. Others there were who at first stood aloof, and felt doubts

about the wisdom of her work, who afterwards saw reason to change their minds.

One of these was the late gifted Dr. Alexander, Archbishop of Armagh, with whom she had a true and pleasant friendship in her old age. In one of his letters, he alluded to this :

“ Thank you for your kind letter. It has done me good, as your letters always do. They have that odour which assures one of the presence of incense—the incense of prayer. I *began* by not understanding you. Then that blindness was removed by my being brought to see that every member of Christ’s Body has a peculiar vocation and ministry. Pray for me, as I do for you, I value your dear Father’s words greatly. The thought of the Saviour’s Death, Rising, Ascension, and Return, are by him very beautifully associated, each with its relation to us. And now I of eighty-four salute you of ninety-one. ‘ The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you, and give you peace.’ ”

Almost every day brought a new interest, and she was quick to grasp it. For instance, when crossing Waterloo Bridge she saw a deserter being arrested. She got out of her cab, asked the man’s name, and the circumstances, which were extenuating. Then she wrote to his Colonel, and pleaded for mercy in his sentence. The happy result was that the deserter became a good and faithful soldier. Later on she heard that he was living a Christian life and was a blessing to his comrades.

An old friend of Birmingham days, Sir James Chance, wished to enlarge her boudoir by turning the balcony into a greenhouse. Two workmen were sent from London, with materials to carry out the plan. It happened that being very tired, she had her breakfast in her boudoir and she handed some of it through the window to the men. As she left the room she heard, to her amusement, one of them say, apparently in answer to a remark, “ *Do* you think any the better of her for that—well, I don’t.”

This depressing statement, instead of discouraging,

quickened her resolve to make friends with them during their two days of work. She talked with them for a few minutes at different times—they were entertained with a good supper before they left, and she gave a book to each and had a short prayer at parting. Of one of them she never heard again, but the other, William Comer, came often from London to attend her service in the Barn, and wrote to her for help in the longing that now came into his heart to live for God. A little later his wife wrote of her husband's happiness, his love of the Bible, and of the family prayers which he had with them daily; and asking Miss Marsh to teach her what she had taught her husband. Then, a letter from the husband told that he and his wife were now quite of one heart. The correspondence was continued at intervals, and the friendship was kept up.

In this spring while Catherine Marsh was absent from home, the young Duchess of Sutherland, Countess of Cromartie, drove down from London to Beckenham one day, wishing to make her acquaintance. She was received at the Rectory by Dr. Marsh, who happened to be the only one of the family at home that afternoon. He wrote and told his daughter of the visit, and of how much he had been charmed with the beauty and the kindness of the visitor.

What she thought of him may be seen in a letter she wrote to his daughter some time after they had met and their friendship had begun.

“Stafford House.—What a sunshine indeed to your home such a darling Father is, so precious to you, and all who come within his influence. His character seems to me quite angelic.”

Afterwards she often stayed with this friend at Stafford House, and in her English and Scotch country homes, and in these visits met many people who appreciated her, and in whom she took a deep and lasting interest. Among these may be mentioned H.R.H. Princess Mary Adelaide (Duchess of Teck), the Duke and Duchess of Argyll and their family, the Master of Blantyre, and Lady Vane, afterwards Lady Londonderry. There she met Mr. Gladstone

and other leading politicians of that day, and Mr. Delane, the Editor of *The Times*; also men and women whose names were known from their achievements in science or literature, and many of the leaders of society. She steered a straight course through the shoals and cross currents of the widely differing views and opinions of those whom she met, keeping the purpose of her life steadfastly in mind.

Lady Frances Balfour wrote the following true description of her :

"This gracious personality has moved among us known to an immense circle in every class of society, and she never lost touch with the children's children of those who were her early friends; and what a beautiful restful presence she had. Time laid no furrowing hand on her lofty and placid brow, the smoothly parted hair grew silver, but age never weakened the voice whose notes were full of the cadence of love. One associates her with all gentle movement, her tall ample figure always robed in soft colours and rich materials, for she said that those who dwelt much with the poor should show as much respect for them as for the rich. Her beautiful white hands were symbolical, firm and helpful for that ministry of body and soul to which she gave her life."

The four rules she made for herself were the following :

"I would go nowhere where I could not ask the Lord Jesus to go with me.

"Nowhere where I could not have met Him when He was on earth.

"Nowhere where I should be ashamed for Him to find me, if He came suddenly.

"Nowhere where, if opportunity offered, it would be profanation to speak of Him.

"I think these would keep me from the Theatre, the Opera, the Racecourse and some other things, but not from places to which He went; for we *know* He was at a wedding feast, and that He went to dine in a Pharisee's house, and to abide in the house of the chief among the Publicans, but it was always with one aim in view, His Father's glory and this included the good of those whom He visited

and met—'Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business.' "

When speaking with any who followed the pleasures that she did not think it right for herself to join in, she did not ask them to give them up, but sought the rather to make clear Christ's love to them, believing that "the expulsive power of the new affection" would, as it grew and strengthened, drive out of the heart and life anything that was contrary to it.

"When will the din of earth grate harshly on our ears?
When we have once heard plain, the music of the spheres."

Some years later she met a rising young physician in London who told her that his younger brother when he was a cadet at Addiscombe, often came to spend Saturday afternoon and evening with him, and they always went together to see a play, until one Saturday when, to his great surprise, his brother said he would rather never go to the theatre again. On asking him why, the answer was, "Because I have spent a Sunday at Beckenham." It had been his first Sunday there, he came as a stranger, but even after he had become a friend, he had never told Catherine Marsh of this, or had asked for any advice that might have led to his decision.

Their old friends, Lady Mayo and her daughter, Lady Margaret Bourke, were staying at Beckenham Rectory in June. They came with Catherine Marsh to her service in the Barn, and afterwards Lady Margaret said to her, "I have never spent such an evening. Now, as soon as we go back to Ireland I shall try what I can do for the police near our home." And she kept her word.

One of the partners in the firm of Copestake, Moore & Crampton, Mr. George Moore,¹ asked Catherine Marsh to come and speak to the people employed in their business; he was anxious to talk with her, to be helped himself, and had gathered 300 young men and women to hear the address. The next week, this letter came, "Our Mr. George

¹ A remarkable man, whose life was written by Samuel Smiles.

Moore has given to each in the employ of his firm, including the servants and porters, more than 400 persons, a copy of one of your books, and a Bible with it, where it was needed." The letter was signed by one of those employed, for all the rest.

One of the head men in another large firm in London, sent her a similar request to Mr. Moore's, and in her response to this invitation, she met with a new experience. The meeting place arranged was in a warehouse room reached by a short narrow flight of stairs. Before she had spoken many words, an ominous crack was heard, and repeated a second time, then it was seen that the floor was sinking in the centre of the room. It had been propped, and one or two of the props had given way. Happily the floor had been covered with a strong carpet, but a rush for the staircase would have involved a danger. She saw this, and said quietly, "Dear friends, will you kindly go out in order, each row at a time. I am going to stay till the last." They did as she asked in such an orderly leisure that afterwards she said, "I longed to say to them, oh, *do* be a little quicker!" They soon reassembled in a room on the ground floor, when the interrupted meeting was happily finished.

In the spring of 1858 Captain Anstruther had been made Adjutant of his Regiment, and as it was quartered in London Catherine Marsh was often visiting her niece, and meeting her husband's friends. Several of them had become like-minded with himself, and they found great help from her, in pursuing the upward path on which they had entered. They gave much of their leisure time to good works, visiting in hospitals, having Bible classes, teaching in the ragged schools held in the evening, or in searching out, and helping the poor in the crowded courts and alleys of London's overwhelming poverty.

Among these friends were Stevenson Arthur Blackwood, then in the first ardour of his love to Christ and His service, an ardour that never grew cold; young Quintin Hogg, fresh from Eton, who was beginning his life-work of devo-

tion to helping boys and men¹; Lord Radstock and his lovely wife, whole-hearted followers of the Saviour; Captain Robert Lindsay, who had won the V.C. at the Alma and at Inkerman—afterwards, as Lord Wantage, well-known and honoured in connection with the Volunteer Movement, and in the work of the Red Cross Society during the Franco-German War; and Captain Frederick Keppel, afterwards Equerry to the Prince of Wales, who was diligently working for the good of the soldiers in his regiment. There were others also, some of whom are still living and working.² These friends arranged to meet together from time to time to study a chapter in the Bible, and to talk over the subject of it, and thus to make their minds familiar with Holy Scripture for their own guidance and for helping others, and the influence of the example of their manner of life was a help to many others, though they did not wholly join with them.

Letters about her books began to reach Catherine Marsh in a continuous stream, and many strangers, afterwards to become friends, came to Beckenham desiring to see and to speak with their author. They came not only from our own country and colonies, but also from America, India, and the Continent. The hospitable doors of the Rectory were ever open to receive them, and Catherine Marsh was ever ready to give them welcome; for these strangers came, not from curiosity, but because her books had awakened a longing, or had found an echo, in their hearts, to either of which she was ready to respond in sympathy or in counsel.

One of the visitors was the Rev. Dr. Stevens of Philadelphia, well-known in the American Church. After his return, he wrote to her :

“ God has honoured and blessed your work on this side of the Atlantic, and many whom you know not now,

¹ Founder of the Polytechnic. His remarkable life is written by his daughter, Mrs. Wood.

² The last of these friends, the Hon. Thomas Pelham, third son of the third Earl of Chichester, died in the spring of 1917. He had kept a straight course of faithful work for God and for the good of others, especially for men and boys, from those early days to the end of his life.

will hail you in Heaven as the instrument of their conversion. Were I to allow myself to write the wellings up of my heart, in view of what God the Holy Ghost has enabled you to do, I should write half the night." The letter ends with messages to each of the inmates of the Rectory, and the words, "your family circle is so photographed on my memory that its lineaments will never be effaced."

The railway from Beckenham was being extended to Lewisham, so the navvies were still kept in the village and neighbourhood, and the good work amongst them was steadily going forward.

In this summer while Catherine Marsh was staying at Terling, she wrote this letter to Lady Kintore :

"That was such a day of interest with the 600 soldiers at Warley Barracks. The old Colonel had formed a square of them and put a mat in the middle—and the stepping upon it was rather awful ! but the minute one saw those earnest eyes of the soldiers, the awfulness was only a solemn thrilling interest. I read them the Parable of the Prodigal Son—and spoke to them of a Saviour's heart of Love, 'as the Spirit gave me utterance;' and by and bye I saw the tears on the dear old Colonel's cheeks and on many of the men's. Then dear Clara Rayleigh helped me give each a book,—and a man spoke with choking voice : 'I knew the Captain—I loved the Captain.' It was one of the men who had carried our Hedley home that last night. And, oh, if you could have heard the lovely things he told us about the courage of his love in the pestilence, and self-denial of his love in the starving winter, when he would come in from the trenches, and seizing his hot breakfast, would carry it to a sick or wounded soldier, often leaving for himself but a dry crust of bread.

"Since writing this we have seen the telegraphic report. Thank God for Lucknow—but brave General Nicholson, and gallant General Neill, and the 1200 soldiers and officers at Delhi ! Oh, when will it all end, and the Prince of Peace come to reign !"

Her next visit was to Birch Hall, near Colchester, the home of a beloved Colchester friend, who was now the wife

of Mr. Charles Round. Their beautiful house was a centre for many good and kindly works, and her stay with them always refreshing to her spirit.

While there she wrote to Lady Rayleigh :

"Most dear you were to me yesterday, and I thanked God for many things that dropped from your dear lips. It is the filling of our empty hearts, our empty lives, with the Holy Spirit, which alone can satisfy and refresh us in the drought of this life, *meant* to be unsatisfying—not in wrath, *nor* in wanton exercise of absolute power, but in true, deep and infinite Love—Love which knows its own and only power to satisfy the cravings of our hearts."

C. M. to her Father :

"We went to Westminster Hospital, but could not find our navvy—he had never come in, certainly ! So, then by favour of doctor and nurse, we got into a very sick ward, and there lay a dying man. After speaking to him for a little while, he said with a look of anguish, 'who can get peace who has deeply sinned ? How can a man forget his guilt ?' 'He need not,' I answered, 'and yet he may have peace, when he knows that his God has forgotten it, for the sake of Jesus Christ His Son, our Saviour.' He listened to several texts with deep interest, and then was delighted with 'Just as I am,' of which, after repeating it, I left a copy with him. Then I asked all the sick men to join with me in praying he might see his Saviour by faith before he died ; and while we were praying, he said 'I believe.'

"Later we went to Lady Gainsborough's tea-party for poor mothers at King's Cross, she was presiding with her young Victoria beside her. I heard one of the guests say as she looked at her hostess, 'A mother ain't she, every bit.' She told them of a Mothers' Meeting which she had in her village, and in one year so many of their prayers were answered for the conversion of their sons, that now whilst the mothers meet in one room, the sons (boys from 12 to 18 or 20) meet in another room to pray for their mothers. When it was my turn, I read part of the 4th chapter of St. John, and they were earnest listeners."

Late in this autumn when Catherine Marsh and her niece were staying at West Cliffe, Ramsgate, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Warre, she met for the first time Mr. Froude, the historian, and then, to quote her own words, the "friendship with James Anthony Froude began—one of the many delightful and interesting friendships given to me by God, in His great goodness, through all my long life." A dreadful storm had made the harbour at Ramsgate a hospital of injured ships, and it gave her the opportunity for taking Testaments and little books to the seamen. When Mr. Froude knew this, he asked to be allowed to go with her, and was much interested in the day's work, especially in one ship where two men who had been put in irons, were brought up on deck for the short service which she held on each ship, and as it ended, the Captain said that after joining in her prayer, he could not but forgive the men, and he instantly gave the order for the irons to be taken off. Her little book, *The Haven and the Home*, tells of this time in Ramsgate harbour.

C. M. to her Father :

"This morning Mr. and Mrs. Warre sent to ask me to take family prayers, which I dreaded much more than the address I am asked to give at the sailors' party. But I felt I might have a message given me for Mr. Froude, if God would send one by me of His free grace and mercy. I well remembered praying for him (an entire stranger) when you and I were hearing about him in Oxford so many years ago. I read the last 5 or 6 verses of St. Matthew xi. At the close of the prayer I heard him say earnestly, Amen, and he was full of feeling and kindness afterwards. Oh, my Father, will you pray that he may come to Jesus Christ, and find rest in Him."

Her next letter to her father is dated :

"Shaking train, *November*, 1859.—Yesterday we were from 11.30 till 1 o'clock at Mrs. Warre's Mothers' Meeting, begun by her since our last visit. After luncheon, just as I lay down to rest my aching head, came a child, in anxiety about her soul. Later on I had a pleasant talk with Mrs. Froude, who is an invalid. Then, the sailors' tea-party

to which they had invited us. They gave us a true sailors' welcome—one old man rose and said, 'Our jewel is come now!' After tea the Rector, Mr. Davis, prayed, and he told them the history of his own conversion, and then he asked me to speak to them. I said, not while they could have him, so he went away."

She never willingly gave an address when a clergyman was present, for she held clear views on the duty of women to the ordained ministry. Her clerical friends understood this, and when they were anxious to hear her they sat at the far end of the room; she had very short sight, and as she never used glasses when giving an address, they knew she would be unaware of their presence.

In this December she was staying at Bedwell Park, the home of Sir Culling Eardley, and according to her custom of taking an interest in the servants, she was speaking with the butler, who told her that he had become a Roman Catholic. What her conversation with him had been, can be gathered from the next letter which is from Miss Eardley, afterwards Mrs. Culling Hanbury.

"Our butler cannot be thankful enough for your kind words to and with him. I felt the wisdom of your advice not to try to win him to mere formal Protestantism, but we talked on the subject that lies far deeper—nor much of that, for his own heart was roused, and he needed but little from other human help. The end is, his doubts increased, he read his Bible as he had not done for years, and now he has written to the only priest who knew anything of him, to say he has seen his errors, and returned to the Church of England he had left some years ago—a very different man from what he was when he left it, for he is now really in earnest about his soul."

On December 29th, she wrote to Robert and Louisa Anstruther:

"I have just left St. Thomas's Hospital, where I was sent for to see one of my dying men on whom the earth fell yesterday, and I write this at London Bridge, for the post will be gone when I get home. John Williams, my dying man, was at the lecture on Sunday night, and had agreed

with his mates to come to the lecture the last night of the year. As the earth fell in, he said that he remembered the words he had heard at the reading, 'Oh, that the golden gates of the Heavenly City may never close against you,' and he prayed, 'Good Lord, open them.' Afterwards he said, 'I never knew before Sunday night that the Lord Jesus was a working man. It keeps filling my heart full, as you may say. It's wonderful.' I got him some oranges and tea and sugar, he had only just come to the works, and was not eligible for club money, and could fancy nothing but 'tea to eat.' Then for the children, I got some little toys, and John said, 'I don't think they or me be so happy with toys and tea, as you be with giving them.' Beloved ones, pray for a mighty blessing on that meeting the last night of the year. Ask for numbers of souls to be sealed for Jesus Christ that night."

On the last night of 1859, at the end of her long list of prayers for others, she wrote: "And for myself Lord Jesus, be Thou my all in all. Let me live on Thee, live to Thee." And to a friend she wrote, "My soul is athirst to know more of Jesus and *the power of His Resurrection*, and to test it for our own lives and hearts and conversation. Do we think half enough of this? I don't, by a thousandth part, but I *want* to do it continually."

When 1860 began she was in the full current of the work she loved. On January 2nd she was asked to meet a gathering of navvies at High Wycombe, and she wrote this account of it to her father:

"Our meeting is over. There were about 200 navvies, some of whom had walked 5 miles to come, and had those 5 miles to go back again; and there were about 100 working men of the place, and perhaps another 100 of women and boys and visitors, so the large room was crowded. I told them a little about God's glorious work in Ireland and elsewhere, and then read St. Luke xv. and talked to them about our Saviour's wonderful love till my own heart overflowed."

A few months later as she was returning from her meeting in the Barn, a stranger joined her, and told her

he heard a navvy singing as he walked along a lonely road. He overtook him, and asked what made him sing, and the man replied, "I am so happy now, that I sing praises to God whenever I think I am alone." He asked him how long he had been so happy, and he replied, "Since the beginning of the year. I was working on the railway at High Wycombe, and Miss Marsh came and spoke to us, and asked us to come to Jesus that we might be safe and happy, and I did come, and now I am so happy."

From High Wycombe they went to Park Place, where she had a meeting in the servants' hall, for the neighbouring people. Then next she went to Watlington Park, now the property of her cousin Susan, the only survivor of Colonel Tilson's family, married to Mr. Shaen Carter. Here, in her mother's old home she had a Bible reading at which the children were present. How abiding was the impression made on one of them, Lilla, afterwards Mrs. Hammersley, is seen in the next letter written between forty and fifty years later.

L. H. to C. M. :

"I wonder if you would yet remember the meeting you had in the dining-room at Watlington when we were children. I remember it still so well, and your text, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' How many happy days we spent with you and your dearest sister at Beckenham Rectory; those days always influenced my life, and made me feel how sweet and wonderful the love of Jesus was, and how beautiful He made both your lives."

On a bitterly cold day when she was waiting in London Bridge Station, she caught sight of the worn face, and heard the hollow cough, of a young Roman Catholic priest, in a third-class carriage. She had in her hand-bag a copy of the reprint of a sermon preached by the Rev. Walter Craddock more than two hundred years ago; in a moment she had taken off the white Shetland wool wrap that was round her throat, and handed it to him through the window, begging him to wear it, and at the same time she asked him to accept the sermon. He took both her little gifts with a grateful smile, and read the title of the sermon, "Good

news from Heaven, to the worst of sinners on earth," then the whistle sounded and the train began to move, but he leant forward to the window and said, "This is the message for me," and she had heard enough to make her thankful for their short meeting.

In this spring Major Vandeleur and his young wife came to stay at Beckenham Rectory. He had been a beloved friend of Catherine Marsh ever since she had been asked to write to him when he was in the Camp before Sebastopol, and had sent him books for his soldiers. On his safe return from the Crimea, he had come first to Beckenham, in good health, and joyful spirits; now the hand of death was upon him, and this visit was his farewell. The few days passed swiftly and peacefully, and he said, "I should like to go to Heaven straight from this dear home," then with a little smile he added, "but it would be giving too much trouble." On the day when they returned to Woolwich, where he had held an appointment in the Royal Arsenal, Catherine Marsh was sitting with him, in the shade of a chestnut tree on the sunny lawn, and he spoke of her first letter as "the morning star of our friendship," and said that his own dear mother would bless her out of Heaven for all she had been to him in the five years, and then he added, the *only* thing that made him shrink from death, was leaving his loved wife and little children.

No pain of parting was permitted to his tender spirit. A few days later he passed from a peaceful sleep into the Presence of his Lord.

C. M. to Lady Rayleigh :

"*Beckenham Rectory, June 5th.*—Our blessed Arthur Vandeleur sleeps in Jesus—this morning in his sleep he passed into Eternity. Not many nobler, purer, more childlike spirits than his have gone through life to almost its meridian;—nor have many humbler Christians passed into their Redeemer's Presence."

Among the many letters she had had from strangers about *English Hearts and Hands* was the following,

from Captain Harris, R.N., of H.M.S. *Illustrious*, in April 1858.

“Madam, I have just been reading of the success which attended your Christian labours with the navvies, and I felt ashamed to think with such a wide field open to me, how very little I had done. After reading *English Hearts and English Hands* I wrote to some friends at Portsmouth, to see if they were willing to join me in an attempt to induce some of the seafaring people to think more seriously. As a first step, I should like, if you will allow, to have a number of cards with the prayer printed on them, similar to those which you circulated so successfully. Any suggestions your experience may offer would be very gratefully received by me.”

Catherine Marsh's answer is not forthcoming, but Captain Harris's reply shows the tenor of it :

“My best thanks are due for your kind letter and the enclosure. I shall write forthwith for 1,000 cards making the alteration in the title you propose (‘Sailors’ instead of ‘Soldiers’ prayer). I should not like to alter a word in a prayer that has been blessed to so many. My professional duties leave me little time out of my ship, but some good may flow from this little effort. I feel certain of your prayers concerning it.”

The distribution of the cards of prayer was followed by other efforts of Captain Harris for the good of the seafaring people at Portsmouth, and from time to time he wrote to Catherine Marsh, to report progress and to ask counsel, and when he was commanding H.M.S. *Britannia*, then the Royal Naval Training Ship, he asked her to come and make acquaintance with the naval cadets. So on February 9th she and her niece went to Portsmouth and had the kindest of welcomes from Captain Harris, his lovely wife and their charming children.

The next day was spent on the *Britannia*. When they were passing the cockpit two boys were still sitting there, though the bugle had sounded for mess. She was told, in a low voice, that it was a punishment, that they were not to join their mess for a month. She asked if she might

have a little talk with them, and they seemed quite sorry when she left them. She now ventured to ask if she might speak to all the cadets together, and give each a copy of one of her books. Captain Harris replied it was just what he wished, but their Chaplain's leave must be obtained; and it was cordially given. She had yet another request to make, might she also speak to the crew? But their Chaplain had gone on shore, so Captain Harris left an invitation for him to meet her at dinner that evening. On returning to Portsmouth she sent a telegram to Messrs. Nisbet asking them to send the books by special messenger, ordering a sufficient number for the crew also, in faith that she would be allowed to give them, and in the evening the Chaplain gave his hearty consent.

In the night a perplexing thought troubled her. She longed to pray with the cadets and the crew after speaking to them, but she felt doubtful if it would be right for her to do this if the Chaplains were present. She carried her difficulty to her Heavenly Father and asked Him to make His way plain for her. In the morning the books had not arrived; it was snowing, and the wind was high, and the row to the ship was a rough one. The sailors went back to see if the books had come, and Captain Harris took his guests to his room, and said as he did so, "I have been thinking, Miss Marsh, that if you would pray with the boys after you have spoken to them, it would help to deepen and fix any impression of good that by God's blessing may be made in their hearts." Her prayer for guidance was answered, and her heart was glad.

Soon the boat returned with the books, and Captain Harris advised she should give them first, to make a favourable impression. So this was done, and the books were eagerly received by the 180 who were present. Captain Harris then said that Miss Marsh, who was going to say a few words to them, was known to the mothers of many of them, and that he was sure they would be glad that she should speak to their sons. Perfect silence and attentive listening followed, and reverence during the prayer. Then she stood at the door and shook hands with each,

as she gave them the same prayer she had given to the Addiscombe cadets.

By this time the ship's crew and the marines, 500 in all, were assembled. A space was left in the middle for her and those with her, but when she began to speak they gathered close round, listening as if afraid to lose a word, and hearty Amens followed her prayer, and each had their book. Then the hospital was visited, and she told a true story to the invalids, and asked them if they would read the Bible and have a little prayer together every day. Each one said, "I will," and as she left the cabin a voice called after her, "We shall begin it at 5 o'clock this afternoon, will you remember to pray for us then?"

Lastly, Captain Harris said he had a young deserter in solitary confinement, brought back the night before, and he was in suspense, not knowing what his punishment would be. She asked to see him, and Captain Harris went with her. After a little talk they knelt in prayer, and in the middle of it the poor boy placed his hands in hers. When she rose, she saw Captain Harris was still kneeling, and when he rose there was a dimness in his kind eyes. Afterwards he told her he intended to forgive the flogging which doubtless was expected!

It was now time to leave the ship, but her thoughts went back to the boys in the cockpit, she did not know that they had been allowed to come to the library with the other cadets, and she asked if she might have one more word with them. Just as she finished speaking, Captain Harris said, "Boys, you are pardoned, you may go back to your mess," and then turning to her, he said, "I wish them always to remember this day with thankfulness and pleasure." So she left the *Britannia*, and returned to Beckenham with a glad heart.

A few days later Captain Harris wrote :

"I visited the poor young prisoner, and found him reading the book you gave him, which gratified me much. To-day I hear that the cadets have been to Mr. Inskip to request that they may have evening prayers always, for which he was most willing, and he has very kindly removed

all difficulties in the way of their own Bible-reading. Our prayer meeting on Saturday evening was attended by 46 of the young sailors, so you see how much reason I have to thank God for your kind visit."

About a month later Captain Harris wrote :

"Your visit has brought blessings which remind me daily to thank God for leading me to read *English Hearts*, and to seek your acquaintance. A number of our dear cadets meet every evening in the library, to read the Bible and pray together. I hear their little knees over my head, and regret that I cannot join them, but feel the restraint of a superior officer would spoil their meeting, and have only let them know how much I approve, and earnestly pray for them. Our sailors' Bible Class goes on steadily, the lads often speak of you."

A little later one of the cadets wrote : "I never saw such a wonderful change as God has worked in this ship. You hardly ever hear one of the cadets swear now."

The Naval Cadets were capital correspondents, and many charming letters came to her from them, and from their relatives, to whom they had written the account of her visit to the *Britannia*, and its happy results. Here is a letter from C. M. to a young midshipman :

"*July 2nd, 1860.*—My dear Friend,—Thank you for your welcome letter. Do write again when you join the *Marlborough*. You will find there my young cousin, Henry Chowne, and one or two more of our old *Britannia* friends. Do ask them if they have a prayer meeting, if not, whether they cannot begin one. Tell them, with my love, I pray God to enable them to stand stedfast for Christ. God bless you, my dear Friend, and fill you with His Holy Spirit. In every moment of temptation, lift up your heart with the prayer, 'Lord Jesus, help,' and you will find Him mighty to save from temptation and danger. Oh, cleave close, close to Him.—Your affectionate friend, CATHERINE MARSH."

In June Catherine Marsh took a small house at Southsea for three weeks to give her niece and her nephew George Frederick Leycester Marshall, who was now her adopted

son, a seaside holiday together. While he was at Addiscombe he had spent his Sundays at Beckenham Rectory, to her and his sister's happiness, and he had attained the senior rank of Engineers, which gave him an additional year and a half in England. The morning after their arrival a boat came from the *Britannia*, and one of her cadet friends, Granville Proby, was the bearer of a note from Captain Harris, telling her that his wife and children were living on board, and asking her to come back in the boat and stay for the night. On reaching the *Britannia* she heard that the prizes were to be given that evening. Great was her pleasure when she saw that the first prize, a gold-headed dirk, was won by Hubert Grenfell, who was one of the first to join the Bible reading, and had never left it. The little ceremony over, Captain Harris asked her to speak to the cadets, and to give what would be a parting message to those who were leaving the ship, to begin their naval career.

Happy were the cadets who were appointed to H.M.S. *Nile*, for their Captain, H. E. Mackenzie, wrote : " Everything ought to be done to encourage the youngsters. I've told some of them that as soon as we get to sea I'll have a screen put up for them where they may read their Bibles undisturbed."

Another day was spent on board H.M.S. *Victory*, where Captain Coote¹ assembled his young sailors to hear her speak. Lieutenant Nelson, who commanded the training brig *Rollo*, was present, and begged her to come to his ship and speak to his sailors the next day, which she gladly did.

With Saturday came an invitation from Mr. Murray, the head of one of the large factories in the dockyard, to come and speak to his men when they left off work that afternoon. She went, and was taken into a large unfurnished upper room quite empty, but directly after, the four o'clock bell rang, and the men came pouring into the room through many different entrances, by which ladders had been placed for temporary staircases, rough

¹ Afterwards Admiral Sir Robert Coote.

shaggy heads and blackened faces appearing on every side. A small heap of planks was placed against the wall, upon which she stood, and those who were with her sat. The men crowded round her, and as soon as her voice was heard there was dead silence : they seemed almost to hold their breath, as if they feared to lose a word, while from the 15th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel she spoke to them of its revelation of Divine Love, until the haggard faces began to light up with the dawn of hope that for them also was preparing the welcome to the Father's Heart and Home. The prayer ended she stood silent, the men stood silent also—then many hard grimy hands sought hers in friendly and grateful grasps—there were some hundreds present, and each accepted a card of prayer. Returning through the dockyard she met two gangs of convicts, and persuaded the officials to allow her to give them the prayers also.

At Captain's Coote's house she met Sir Leopold McClintock, who welcomed her offer of sending books for the officers and crew of his ship *H.M.S. Bull-dog* for reading in their long Arctic voyage. Here she met also Lieutenant Charles Parry, Mrs. Coote's brother ; their father was Sir Edward Parry of Arctic fame. He was going to sea with Sir Leopold. Though this was their only meeting, there was a bond of sympathy which drew them together, as the following note will show—

“ Dear Miss Marsh,—Hedley Vicars' memoir has been such a friend to me that I have never been without it since it first was published ! His example has cheered me during many a desponding time when it has appeared to me as if I had been left all alone. Hedley's example has stirred me up to still more earnest prayer, and my heart has often bounded with joy when I have been able to give away a copy of that valuable life to a friend whose soul's interest I had specially at heart.”

C. M. to her Father :

“ *Southsea, June 25th.*—Think of my astonishment and terror when a note came from the minister of the Scotch church here, begging me on behalf of himself and his

elders—to address his congregation, after his evening service—not from the pulpit—but from the elders' elevated position!!! Of course I sent word that I was most humbly grateful, but 'declined with thanks.' To-day if fine we are to dine early on board H.M.S. *Asia*, the ship of war, which guards Portsmouth, to see the men and give them books. Coming back from Church last evening, we met a young sailor with a bright face. I gave him a book, 'You gave me one another day,' he said, 'and it was not the first I've had. We've had *such* an officer, our first Gunner Lieut. He's had a prayer meeting with us every day. He's gone now to another ship. Afore he left he had us into his cabin as full as it could hold, and prayed with us, and said "Now boys live out right for God. Never go and be ashamed of your Saviour." Was not that a dear young Lieutenant!' Sir Leopold McClintock came to bid us goodbye, and he fell in love with Charlie Baldwin who had come to us from Saturday till Monday, and with my Georgie too, and wanted to have them both go to sea with him, and we all returned his kind wish, by wishing he would live on land with us!"

Among her visits to other ships, Captain Gordon of the *Asia*, took her to H.M.S. *The Duke of Wellington*. When he told her that he had commanded this ship in the Baltic Fleet, she asked him if the cards of prayer sent for each sailor in the Fleet had been received on his ship. "Oh that they were," he replied, "I had no idea you had sent them. I had the box full of them put in the steward's room, and let the men know that any one who pleased might take a card, and by the evening the box was empty."

There was a fair held on Southsea Common, so Catherine Marsh went to give away little books to the people who were walking about in it. A working-man accepted the book very gratefully and she began to talk with him, and asked if he had yet given his heart to the Lord Jesus. He gave no answer, and turned away his face. His wife who was standing near said, "He's been always talking about that since you spoke to the men in the dockyard; he's been quite solemn ever since." On hearing this he

said, "I *wish* to live for God, but I have not done it yet." Before they parted he had promised her that he would begin to read the Bible, and to pray with his wife from that night. He told her that many of the men who came to hear her on Saturday were infidels, and when she expressed surprise that they came, he answered, "Oh, but they all have a love for you."

A little tour in the Isle of Wight finished this pleasant holiday.

After their return to Beckenham Rectory, a young man who had just been ordained, came for a short visit, on his way to his clerical work. Catherine Marsh discerned that his apparent light-heartedness hid an anxious and unsatisfied heart. She took every opportunity of talking with him of the reality which would supply his every need in his holy calling, and satisfy the longings of his heart. When the last evening of his visit came, just after family prayer, he asked her to stay for a few minutes, and when they were alone he said, "I came here utterly miserable, and I am going away very happy, for here I have found the way of peace, through Jesus Christ. It began the first morning in the conversation and prayer with you in your boudoir, and even if I should lose the joy for a while, you have shown me the way to get it back again, by coming afresh to Jesus. Now I am going to work for my Master, and my first desire is to win souls to Him." This he did, to the end of his earthly life.

It was Catherine Marsh's natural impulse to attract her hearers to Divine Truths by showing forth Divine Love; yet when she felt it was needful she did not shrink from speaking words of warning. One of her friends whom she had good reason to believe had for some time past been leading a new life, had now turned away from it, to all appearance completely. It was anguish of heart to her. She had written to him, but he would not even answer her letters. She poured out her soul in prayer for him, giving God no rest till her prayer was answered. At last he consented to come to see her once more. Her

niece, her constant companion, was away for a few days, and to her she wrote the following letter.

"He arrived on Saturday evening, and we walked together in the shrubbery. He gave a short cold laugh, and said that he had decided not to come back to God. When he came in I asked him to come to the boudoir, and I read aloud Isaiah xliii. 22 to 25. He listened like a stone and said, 'But I have *no wish* to return to God.' Neither the invitations nor the warnings of God's Word seemed to reach him. I prayed with him, but he did not kneel or join in prayer. At the close he said, 'Why do you pray for me—why do you let your tears almost choke you as you pray? I do not wish to be prayed for. I grieve to see *you* grieved—but I cannot, I *will not* pray.' For half an hour I besought him just to say 'Saviour of the lost, save me.' 'No,' he said, 'it would be all up with me if I did. He would hear me, and I don't wish it,' and he left me with a fixed determination not to pray; he said he had not prayed, nor opened his Bible for a month.

"The next morning I thought he looked a little less stony—and as we walked in the garden he said, 'One feels different on Sundays. I feel rather different now from what I felt last night.' 'No wonder,' I said, 'for this is the Lord's Day, when He will make His mighty power to be known.' He listened in a softened manner, but in church he joined neither in the service or the singing, but sat looking again like a stone. In the afternoon he spent an hour with me, and asked if I had ever known a child of God do as he had done, and yet be saved, yet return to his God? I told him of one whom I knew, who had—and then said 'and now, for more than a year that man has been beholding his Redeemer's face in glory.' He seemed softened, and said he would stay for the barn service. But at dinner, the stony look came back again, and he said, 'It is likely to be a wet night, so I shall take the 7 o'clock train.' After dinner, I called him out of the room and said, 'I understand it all. The Devil won't let you stay for the barn reading, he is afraid of losing you there.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'that's it,' and again came

the cold laugh. 'Well, be that as it may, I ask you most earnestly to stay, as a personal kindness to me. I want you there.' 'I shall do you no good,' he said. 'You will do me great harm if you won't stay for it. I shall be too wretched to give my Master's message to others—and oh—if *you* are not to be brought back to Jesus Christ, what is to become of my faith for the souls of others?' He stood still a little while and then said: 'Well, I will stay, but don't expect more, I *cannot* come back.' I went on, leaving him to follow with Matilda, and I said to Mary who came with me, 'I cannot bear the anguish of prayer for this soul much longer.' The good Lord cut it short with *praise*.

"At the Barn I read Jeremiah xxxii. 38—to the end, and xxxiii. to the 9th verse, and after *letting* the Jews have the first right to the promises, I took it all for ourselves in spiritual blessings. My soul realised the Presence of God, and a solemnity seemed to be upon all, and I besought them: 'You who have never come to Him, *and you who have deserted Him—let Him not go back from amongst us, with His love rejected.*' There was a low suppressed groan behind me.

"As we walked home I said to him. 'And now, for your decision.' 'When I leave my present post I will return to Him.'

"And perhaps you will leave it for your grave, and have no time to return to Him. Besides, is *that Love*, that tenderest most self-sacrificing *Love*, to be rejected for some months more, and His Name dishonoured by your treachery? Oh no! to-night, now, you must, you will, come back to Him. You are miserable. Such a heart as yours can have no peace when at variance with your best, and kindest, and Divine Saviour and Friend.' We had reached the Rectory gate, a great conflict was going on in his soul.

"We stood still in silence—then he turned his pale face to me, and said, 'I *will* pray. *I will come back to Him by His help.*'

"The evil spirit fled, and again he had the face of

former days. We went into the Rectory for one more prayer together with thanksgiving; and at half past nine o'clock he left us, with his face set Heavenwards."

This dear friend of hers had many more years for serving his God, and then he entered the Heaven towards which he had set his face that night.

BEDDINGTON

FOUR HAPPY YEARS

1860-1864

"Hearts may be found that harbour at this hour
The love of Christ, and all its quickening power,
O days of Heaven, and nights of equal praise,
Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days."

WILLIAM COWPER.

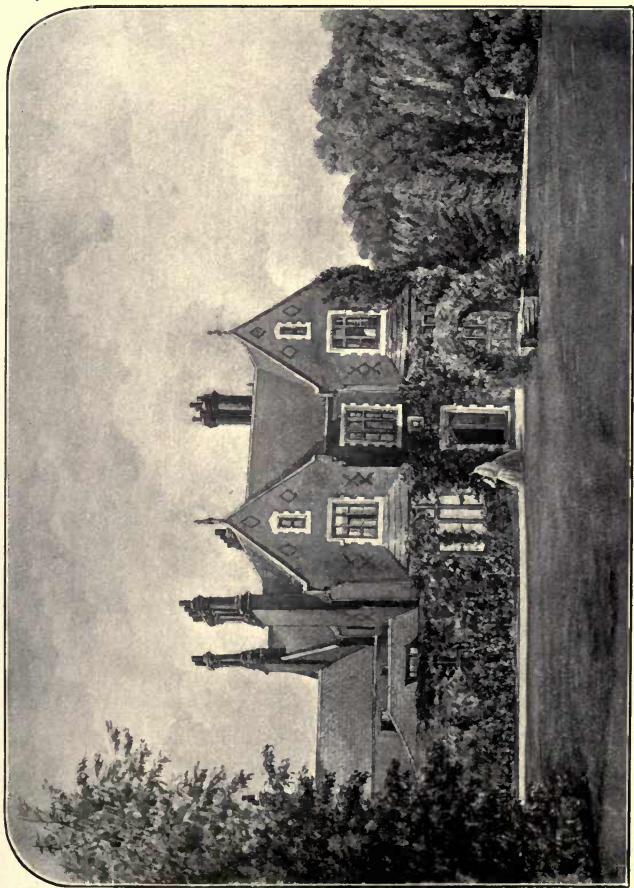
"How happily the working days
In His dear service fly;
How rapidly the resting hour,
The time of peace, draws nigh."

THE time had come when Beckenham Rectory, where Catherine Marsh's life work had reached its highest point, was no longer to be her home, though she would often re-visit it.

Her father had been offered the living of Beddington, only a few miles from Beckenham. He twice refused it, but when it was urged a third time, and the aged father of the late Rector said it would be a great consolation to him if Dr. Marsh would be the successor of his beloved only son, he consented.

Nowwithstanding his age, he was young in heart, his mind, well furnished by constant reading, was clear and vigorous, and his voice had kept its fine tone for reading and preaching. Beddington was a well-ordered parish, and the parishioners were mourning their excellent late Rector, who had been with them many years, and was a High Churchman of the old-fashioned school.

If there had been any misgivings in the minds of some of the parishioners, they quickly vanished when they knew Dr. Marsh and his daughter, and found that all the good parochial work was continued, and the services in their



BEDDINGTON RECTORY, SURREY.

beautiful church were conducted with reverence ; while the preaching aroused a fresh interest in many minds. Four clergymen were Dr. Marsh's colleagues at different times during his ministry at Beddington ; of these the Rev. Henry Willes Southey is the only one still living. He was afterwards Rector of Woburn, and his life has been spent in conscientious devotion to the duties of his sacred calling. Another was the Rev. Thomas Valpy French, a man of great learning, and of apostolic spirit. He was afterwards the first Bishop of Lahore ; and he died, a lonely pioneer, at the Missionary outpost of Muscat in Arabia, on May 14th, 1891. The third was the Rev. George Maxwell Gordon, who afterwards worked as an honorary Missionary in Persia and India. He was fatally wounded while helping to carry in the injured after a sortie, during the siege of Kandahar, on August 16th, 1880, and that evening he was buried in a soldier's grave. The fourth was the Rev. Henry O'Rorke, who came to Beddington with Dr. Marsh, and remained until after his departure. He was a preacher of rare gifts, and of still rarer attractions of character.

Soon after their arrival at Beddington, Catherine Marsh wrote to Mrs. Dudley Ryder :

" *August 20th, 1860.*—Yes, I could come to you at Westbrook Hay, but I could only be absent from home one night, and must divide that between you and my dear Marianne Acklom ! You can arrange with her whether I shall stay with you till 3 a.m. and reach Hemel Hempsted Vicarage by sunrise—or *vice versa*. My father ' read himself in ' yesterday, taking both full services, and the 39 Articles. He seems to be having his youth renewed to work for God here, and so I have a parish now, on the top of my four continents and Australia, to correspond with ! "

At one end of the parish there was a large tannery, and the owner, Mr. MacRae, made her welcome to have a weekly meeting with his men. Just across the border of the adjoining parish, Carshalton, was a paper mill, and the workers there sent her an entreaty to come to them

also; and this she did with the Rector the Rev. William Cator's hearty permission.

The road from London to Epsom passes through Beddington, and the Derby Day was generally taken as a holiday by the working men. There were sad hearts and homes in the parish, which dated their troubles from that day's temptations. When Catherine Marsh knew this, she resolved to make a counter-attraction. She sent an invitation to the mill-workers, to have an afternoon game of cricket in Beddington Park, having gained the owner's leave—and then to come and have tea and spend the evening in the Rectory Grounds. She asked them to take a day to consider their answer, and feeling that so simple an entertainment might be felt but a poor exchange for the excitement of the great race, she prayed earnestly while she waited for it. It came, an acceptance from all the men with but two exceptions. As long as she lived in Beddington she kept up her "rival Derby Day party."

After the first Derby Day she wrote to Caroline Maitland:

"When any good that God has worked by you, or by me, comes to be weighed in the eternal balances, yours may weigh the heaviest. My little work for souls goes more into shop windows—yours is kept in the warehouse. But our rival tea-party was a thing to thank God for, when we heard that a poor invalid, whose home is in the midst of the mill-workers' cottages, said, 'she never knew such a Derby Day night before; no fighting, no drunken singing and noises, only tramp, tramp, tramp quietly home, some of them singing a hymn tune one to the other.'"

There were more tea-parties, for she had a great belief in the good of such friendly gatherings, soldiers from the barracks in the neighbourhood; or mothers with their little children; or haymakers after their hard day's work—but the great day of all was her father's birthday.

Charles Fines, a working jeweller, describes the state of the parish about this time. "I can never forget the times I have been at Beddington. A country place in long dark evenings is usually so dull for the working people, with the mind left to itself to deaden with the fatigue of

daily work. Again and again to find in such a place, the roadsides in the evening occupied by cheerful earnest people, going to and fro from meetings, where hearing the Word of God explained was the inducement and the delight."

The pleasant way in which Catherine Marsh took good advice comes out in a letter to her niece, written one Sunday evening. "This morning I was at the Sunday School, and afterwards nice, kind Miss Courage told me I prayed too long with the children, and they fidgeted! So I loved her for her honesty, and will be short next time."

Any injustice done always drew out her indignant sympathy; this feeling led her to write, on such an occasion, to the Master of Balliol, who replied:

"Dear Madam,—Accept my best thanks for your kind letter, and for the books you have been so good as to send me. I certainly hope (though conscious of how little I am able to do) that I shall devote my life to the service of God, and of the youth of Oxford, whom I desire to regard as a trust which He has given me. But I am afraid, if I may judge from the tenour of your letter, that I should not express myself altogether as you do on religious subjects. Perhaps the difference may be more than one of words. I will not, therefore, enter further into the grave question suggested by you, except to say that I am sure I shall be the better for your kind wishes, and reading your books.

"The recent matter at Oxford is of no real consequence, and is not worth speaking about, though I am very grateful to you and others for feeling 'indignant' at the refusal. With sincere respect for your labours, believe me, dear Madam, most truly yours, B. JOWETT.

"I have read over your letter again. I think that I ought to tell you that unless you had been a complete stranger, you would not have had so good an opinion of me. I feel the kindness of your letter, but at the same time if I believed what you say of me, I should soon become a 'very complete rascal.' Any letter like yours which is written with such earnestness, and in a time of illness, is a serious call to think about religion. I do not

intend to neglect this because I am not inclined to use the same language."

That her interest in young soldiers was unabated is seen in the next letter, to Mrs. Chalmers :

"About six weeks ago a young officer, a stranger, wrote asking if he might come to consult me in a difficulty. He came, and after he had told me the circumstances of the person he had found in a state of desperation, and I had promised to do what I could in the matter, I said, 'and now while you are doing your best to rescue a fellow creature from the grasp of the Devil—are you yourself free from his grasp?' 'Oh, it's no use for me,' he said, 'to try to be different. You don't know to whom you are speaking. I am given over to wickedness.'

"'And you may be given over to the Saviour of sinners to-day,' I replied, 'you may go out of that door, washed in your Saviour's Blood, and made whiter than snow. There is pardon for you now—there is hope, there is Life.' The next moment he knelt down beside me, asking to be prayed with, that 'then and there the message of mercy might reach his heart.'

"He spent the next Sunday with us, went to Church twice, and to the schoolroom meeting with me—and at 10 o'clock he had to return to Chatham. The next day he wrote :

"'I am softened, but not converted. I long to pray, but cannot. Sin has still its dominion over me. Oh, pray hard that I may be delivered over from the Devil, to the Lord Jesus Christ.'

"He came again two or three times, and at last he left with me the names of four of his brother officers, to be specially prayed for. One was ill, to him I wrote, and sent a book, and after I came to stay in London, he came to see me, and I do believe he is earnestly seeking Jesus. My first friend has written, 'God must be helping me now, for I can pour out my soul in prayer, and I am sick of sin.' "

For three years he lived a good and happy life, confessing Christ by his lips, and his life. But on a voyage, away from all Christian help, he had been surprised into

a sudden denial of his Lord; and losing heart and hope, fell back into folly and sin. But after a time he repented, like Peter, with bitter weeping, yet he caught no sight of His Lord's look of tenderness upon his tears. He went into consumption, and wrote to Catherine Marsh, "I am dying at Torquay—unready and unhappy, will you come to me?"

The next day she was with him. No offer of God's mercy conveyed the least hope to his heart. "The invitations are for strangers," he said; "I have been a son, and have dragged His Name through the mire—there can be no forgiveness for me." "Then," as she wrote, "the story of the prodigal shone out in the darkness. Was *he* not a son, and had he not covered his Father's name with shame? Yet the Father saw him in the far distance, ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." "Then he sees me," said the dying man, "and welcomes me to His Heart again. I had forgotten the greatness of His pardoning love." Three days later he died, faintly saying: "I will arise and go to my Father—my Saviour—my God."

To return to her life at Beddington. On the night of August 12th, 1862, just as family prayers ended, footsteps on the garden path, followed by tapping on the window, startled those who were bidding their lingering good-nights. Catherine Marsh drew aside the curtains, and saw in the moonlight, a man holding out a telegram. It was from Interlaken, where Arthur Elliott was staying with his family, and it was sent by his father: "Pray for the departing spirit of our Arthur, he is quite conscious. All is peace." She sent an answer which Arthur kept beside him as long as he lived.

After his departure she wrote of him to the cadets at Addiscombe: "For five years, since the day when he told me in my boudoir at Beckenham Rectory that there he first believed in Jesus Christ *as his own* Saviour,¹ I have

¹ When Catherine Marsh was paying a short visit to Arthur Elliott's parents in 1860, his mother said to her: "How can I ever thank you enough for being such a help and blessing to my son?" and she replied: "Dear Mrs. Elliott, don't thank *me*. I was only the poker that stirred the fire you have laid by long years of prayer."

never seen a trace of coldness or backsliding from that Saviour's love and service; and nearly the last words he said were, 'It is better to depart and be with Christ—*far better.*' His father wrote, 'God has taken from us the most blameless, most loving, most attractive of sons.' "

Arthur Elliott's health had obliged him to resign his commission in the Engineers; he was at Trinity College, Cambridge, intending to take Holy Orders, when this fever ended his short, but bright, career on earth.

About this time Mrs. Vandeleur earnestly asked her to write the life of her husband. It was a great addition to all the new duties of her life, but it was a labour of love, and she often had reason to be glad that she had not refused to write it. She tells in the next letter of one such reason. Lady Gainsborough had taken her to see a friend of hers who was dying of cancer, and Catherine Marsh wrote:

"She was such a patient creature, but she had been sorely troubled by reading in a memoir of a good woman that she spoke of her 'sweet sufferings,' and she said, 'I cannot feel mine sweet, I can only say, "Thy will be done."' So I told her that surely our Blessed Lord did not think His sufferings sweet, for He prayed that if it was possible, they might pass from Him, and the thought comforted her. Then she told me she had found more comfort and help in dear Arthur Vandeleur's Life than in any book she had read, except the Bible." The letter ended thus, "At 6 o'clock I got back to the Rectory, and found only 53 letters awaiting me!"

She now had many friends in Beddington, but one was specially dear to her heart, and from her she received this letter on her birthday.

"From Mrs. Laurence, *September 14th.*—Not 53 letters to-morrow, more likely 153 will you have on that dear day. How I love you, and bless God for the day which gave me such a friend no words will ever tell, but He knows."

These were years of public troubles. The war in America occupied much of Catherine Marsh's thoughts,



CATHERINE MARSH.

From a photograph by Elliott and Fry, Ltd.

for she had many friends there. Her sympathy was with the North in the cause of freedom, but she also had friends in the South. Among them Colonel Henderson Smith, the head of the Military Academy at Lexington, Virginia, a man of kindred spirit with the great and good General "Stonewall" Jackson.

India also was much on her mind, for the appointment of its Governor-General was about to be made, and she felt how greatly, in this crisis of its fate, the future of this vast Empire depended on the choice. She, therefore, wrote on the subject to Lord Shaftesbury, and he replied :

"It is a great pleasure to me to see your handwriting again. You have a very high notion of my influence if you think my voice would be listened to about this appointment. Sir John Lawrence is the true man, I have always maintained it, by his merits and supreme fitness. Yet what I can do, God helping me, that I will do ; you must not be disappointed if my efforts issue in nothing."

On the 2nd of December, 1863, she knew her prayer about the appointment had been answered, and she wrote to Lord Shaftesbury :

"What great news for India has just reached me. Thank God, and thank you. Now let us pray for great grace, heavenly wisdom, unflinching faith, and Christian courage, for that lion-heart."

On the same day she wrote to Sir John Lawrence :

"The great news of your appointment for which I have been waiting upon God, if it would be for His glory, and no hurt or harm to you and yours—has just reached us. God be praised, and God grant you health and strength, and unfailing wisdom to promote His glory, the honour of your country, and the welfare of India's millions."

The next day she wrote to her father :—

"This morning I awoke with the words 'Sir John Lawrence for India.' God be praised for this answer to much prayer. Humanly speaking there can be nothing better than his practical experience, calm courage, clear *Lawrence* foresight and his granite strength, for the steady-ing of British possession, as well as for the good of our

Empire. It is singular that the Governor-Generalship of India should be offered to two brothers (though it came too late for one) who began life as Irish gentlemen without fortune, save that greatest one, their own high honour, rigid truth, and fearless courage. I had a lovely little letter from Sir John, which I will keep to show you, and the best of it is one knows that whatever he says is far below the mark of his feelings."

In the spring of 1863 Catherine Marsh spent a short time at Brighton, to recruit after the winter's work which had ended for her in an attack of bronchitis. She went first to stay for two or three days with friends at the Albion Hotel, and thence wrote to her father on April 18th :

"Stevie met us, and brought us here, where dear Mary-Anne and Gina Hardy were ready to welcome us. In the evening we asked any of the maids who could, to come to family prayers, and they seemed very thankful. Yesterday they would not let me go out, but I enjoyed the morning service on my sofa, and had some little talks with maids and waiters. The men told me they could hardly ever get to church, seaside hotels are always full on Sunday, but we had some heart talks about getting ready for an Eternal Sabbath. Stevie will come to help at family prayers to-night, so I invited the head waiter and the others. Soon the waiter came up to say, Mme. Dubois, the landlady, wished to see me. She came, and after I had told her of what our Blessed Saviour had done in the hearts and lives of some I had known, she rose up suddenly, looking sorely troubled, and taking my hand said, 'I know nothing of that. I have no Saviour to flee to. Often I think I shall lose my reason. When I go on the pier I look at the chinks, and wish I could see one large enough to slip through, and lose myself in that great sea.' I said, 'Instead, you shall lose yourself in the great sea of love in your Saviour's Heart—this very night, by His grace, for He is waiting to save you. Why should you delay?' She replied she could not *feel* anything about Him, and I said we were not told to *feel* love, only '*believe* and thou shalt

be saved.' Then we prayed together, and as she rose from kneeling, she asked, 'Is believing, *Life?*' and I said, 'It is,' and repeated St. John iii. 16. Then she replied, 'I believe Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I will despair no more, if He will only keep me. God forever bless you. He sent you to be a blessing to me.' She left me, and soon sent her husband, who said, 'I am French, and a Catholic by birth, but Madame is so very amiable that I became of her religion to oblige her—her temper is so very good.' 'But on no other ground?' I enquired. 'None whatever,' was his answer. So I had much the same conversation with him, as I had had with his wife. He asked if he might come to prayers, and I said that any one who wished would be welcome. When Stevie came the room was full—with visitors, the Hotel owners, and the servants of both. He spoke with power and simplicity on the concluding verses of Revelation iii., then we had prayer, and sang a hymn. A waiter said to me to-day, 'We can't go to hear such good things; it is a *great* thing to bring them to us.' It is delightful to have Stevie and Sydney here—she has a great soul, and a stedfast heart. The servants were told they could have family prayers again to-night, 9.15 is their chosen time. We had not invited visitors—but in came an elderly gentleman, a friend of Stevie's, introducing Mr. C——, a Poor Law Commissioner, followed by many strangers, ushered in by name by the head waiter! I felt rather distressed, having thought only of the servants coming—but I prayed to be helped, and read from St. John xx. our Lord's appearing to His disciples and Thomas—and as I faintly realized those wondrous inspired words, I was helped. When the others left the room Madame Dubois stayed, and looking up with shining eyes said, 'My soul is at rest in my Saviour. Pray for me that I may never fall away; I want to please Him in everything.'"

On the day she was leaving the Albion she had a few words alone with each of the twenty-seven servants, and to each she gave one of her own books.

Then she and her niece went to Esplanade House, and

while there she had many visits from the Hotel servants, and Madame Dubois, who had set her heart on winning her husband for Christ, which afterwards she did.

The next Sunday evening was spent at the Albion at Madame Dubois's earnest entreaty, for one of their visitors, an old man, had come back from London "on purpose," he said, "for the sake of family prayers." That night ten of the maids and four of the waiters, remained for more words of help—and an old Scotch butler said to her, "I have known it all my life in my head, now I just want it in my heart."

Again she wrote to her father :

"Car Maitland is in Brighton and we often meet. She is so delightful, entering with such loving joy into all the interests our God has brought to us. Her clear deep thought—(what a rare quality of brain, and what a grasp of heart-faith is hers) has been such a gift of help in conversations with one whose friendship with some unbelieving men of genius has brought mists of doubt to overshadow her former clear faith, and I feel sure God is bringing her back into the sunshine again! What a pleasant world Heaven will be to live in; God has given me some lovely foretastes of it at Brighton."

The spirit in which she sought to meet those whose religion was different from her own, is shown in a letter to her father, in which—after telling him she had been asked to make friends with a young married lady, who while staying with some Roman Catholics, had met a singularly influential priest, a pervert from the Church of England, and under his attraction and teaching, it was feared she would take the same step, if she had not already taken it—she wrote :

"To-morrow I am to meet her. It will be Ascension Day—so I fling my poverty upon His bounty Who has 'ascended up on high, and received gifts for men.' It was a night of crying to the Lord whenever I woke, to deliver that soul. I told my God I wished every human feeling about it to be taken out of me, and that if I went in any spirit of rivalry between my Church, so devotedly

beloved from my childhood, and their Church, or with any desire to proselytize, or to save from proselytism, I *knew* my efforts must be utterly fruitless, and I besought Him to use my poor lips to speak *His* message of pardon and peace, through Jesus Christ alone. Then I remembered dear old Harry Grey's saying, 'I link my weakness to God's strength, and become one with Omnipotence.'"

Afterwards she recounted to her father her conversation with the stranger—and told him that when they had prayed together she said, "Would to God I had seen you before I saw that priest."

A few days later she wrote again :

"Oh, my Father, it makes my heart almost too full as I write to you. That young married lady came to-day and said that she could no longer help telling me, that as we knelt together in prayer on Ascension Day, she in her heart gave up her Roman Catholic priest, for the one great, true and only High Priest, our Divine and Human Saviour."

This autumn Catherine Marsh delayed her Scotch journey till November, when her father went to pay a visit at Beckenham Rectory. On their way north she and her niece spent a few days at Rickerby, near Carlisle, where she was greatly interested in the different benevolent plans of Mr. and Mrs. Head, and especially in the Boys' Reformatory, built and supported by him, in which the happy result of the wise and kind treatment of the young offenders was, that eighty-eight out of every hundred had turned out well. She was asked to speak to them, which she gladly did, and they in return asked to be allowed to come with their band, to play and sing hymns to her the next morning. They came, and she wrote to her father, "They sent in a message, 'Would the lady talk to them again?' so we had a little conference together, and very dear were those young convicts to me." The letter ends thus: "We dearly loved Mr. and Mrs. Head, and it was pleasant to know they also loved us."

From Balcaskie in Fife, which was now the home of her elder niece, she wrote to her father :

“The Minister of St. Monan’s was here to-day, and again he asked me to meet the fishermen on the pier, and their wives in the schoolroom. When he said, ‘You have great influence with those wild fishermen,’ he looked so good, and genial, and kindly that I could not bear to say a word that might seem ungrateful—otherwise my *heart* said ‘Influence! and what use was it, if it stopped short at itself?’ Influence is such a rotten thing—I hate the talk about it, and I hate the thing itself still more. The only influence that can bring blessing is, I believe, that which shines through a man (or woman) from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Oh, beloved Father, do pray that He may dwell in me richly.”

A few days later she wrote to him from Balfour, the home of Admiral and Mrs. Bethune, where there was a Church of England within easy reach.

“What it was to get to our own service again and to hear it read—no, not read, but prayed as it was. Then there was the Communion Service, and a baby came from the hills to be baptized, and if they had had *all* the occasional services in the Prayer Book, I should hardly have thought it too much, it was such a comfort and joy to have it again. The little Church is filled to overflowing. How we have all enjoyed your sailor story—‘If He saves such a sinner as I am, He shall never hear the last of it’—and your comment about the never-ending Hallelujahs.”

During one visit she became deeply, and at first painfully, interested in an old lady who was blind, in failing health, clever and intellectual, but an unbeliever. In her anxiety she sought the help of her father’s counsel, and his prayers; she wrote to him:

“On Sunday afternoon Lady — was still kept to her room, and she asked for a visit from me. Two or three things I read seemed to interest her. But after a while she began a vehement denial of all belief in the Divinity of our blessed Saviour, and even of His mission being more Divine than that of Confucius, or Socrates, etc. You will understand the sort of sad horror with which I listened—praying all the while that the Holy Spirit would teach me

how to speak for Him, Whose Name is above every name, and Who is my Lord, and my God, while not forgetting that age and blindness had tender claims for forbearance and deference. I remembered Bishop McIlvaine's advice to begin by establishing confidence in Him as a Man, and a Teacher. So I spoke of the loveliness of His life, of the purity and wisdom of His doctrine, the power and completeness of His miracles, and she agreed, except as to His miraculous powers, which she believes to have been an invention of His disciples! Then I asked her if such a Man, the soul of honour and truth and goodness, could have committed Himself deliberately to a lie—a lie of blasphemy—too, as the assumption that He and the Father were *One*, must have been, had it fallen one iota short of absolute eternal Truth. Then she grew more vehement still, and said she 'held by one God, and need believe in no other, the doctrine of the Trinity was abhorrent to her. I ventured to plead His own way of giving us rest of soul, 'Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, *believe also in Me.*' 'Never, never, never,' she said, her poor sightless eyes dilating, her aged face whitening—and she leant back in her chair, and waited for a reply. I knelt down quietly by her side, unnoticed by her. 'Now,' she said in the same hard tone, 'you are going, I suppose, disgusted and hating me.'

"I took her thin little hand in mine, and kissed it as I knelt, and then held it to my eyes to stop the tears which would come, and only said, 'You will not be grieved with me for praying that you may be taught of God to know Him, Whom to know is Life Eternal—my Peace, my Rest, my Atonement, my Sacrifice, my Lord, my King, my Saviour.' When I looked up all the white rage was gone from her poor old face, and she was murmuring something to herself as I closed the door, about 'a gentle tender heart'—but whether it belonged to her or to me was not made clear! Lucy had just come back from Church and came to my room where we prayed together for that poor sad soul. Do pray, darling Father, that yet she may have faith given her to see Jesus—and then by

and by those blind (real) eyes will 'see the King in His Beauty.'

"After dinner she asked if Lucy would go up to read to her, and as I passed along the corridor, the door being open, I heard her reading the 14th chapter of St. John. Blessings on the Church Service which had it for the second lesson that evening. After it was ended she said to Lucy, 'Your Aunt spoke of a chapter in Isaiah, which she seemed to think much of—as a prophecy of Jesus of Nazareth—could you find it, my dear? It had in it a verse about laying upon Him the iniquity of us all.' I thought, when Lucy told me this, the Lord had sent it to me as a token for good.

"On Monday evening I ventured into *my lion's den* but only spoke of subjects of general interest, though praying in my heart nearly half the time."

Some days later she wrote to her father again, "The one of whom I wrote you a long private letter, has grown so tender to me—that I do think it is of the Lord, when I recall her far different looks and tones; and I treasure up each word of kindness from her dear old lips, as little signs of softening to the message itself. Now I can go on both talking with and reading to her, often for the moment forgetting she does not *yet* believe as we do. But I see the Day-star dawning over that darkened soul, and mine entreats—oh, many, many times each day, 'Arise, Thou Sun of Righteousness, with healing in Thy wings.'"

The next letter :

"Precious Father, the old lady came downstairs again on Thursday and we fell into general conversation on the conversion and after life of St. Paul, and when I alluded to his touching remembrance, in each time he tells of his conversion, to the first time that he heard from Christian lips the word 'Brother,' then first the love of the brethren met his heart, and warmed it—and found too, a ready kindled flame—she said, 'But Ananias must have been taught to say it by Jesus, or the Holy Spirit.' Oh, dearest, when I remembered how utterly she had seemed like those disciples of John the Baptist who 'had not so much as

heard whether there be any Holy Ghost'—my heart was filled with thankfulness.

"The next night I read your letter to her, in her own room, answering the difficulties she had suggested. She did not say a single word in opposition, though she fights like a boxer against all my other human authorities—but my stories about you have gone to her heart. I told her of your liking to have a promise from God's word at night as a pillow to sleep upon, and then said, 'May I give you a pillow?' 'Yes, my friend,' was her reply, and I gave her, 'Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' Then I kissed her hand and sped away softly and swiftly for fear the demon of argument might come in, and spoil the tranquillising great truth of those divine words."

A little later she wrote: "I shall not see her again, the doctor is afraid of any leave-taking for her. I should have loved to hear her say, 'I believe.' You see, precious Father, if I had been allowed to know it before I left, I might have been so foolish as to think I went the right way to work, and that *my heart* was the right thing to match *her head*. But now, I just cast her upon the Lord—'Lord, do the whole work by any one, or by Thyself alone.' I rest in His faithfulness, and she told me she had begun to pray."

When the time came that death was drawing near, it was not to Socrates nor Confucius that the aged dying one turned—one of the last things she was heard to say, was "Kind Jesus will help me."

On the return journey a night was spent in Edinburgh, and Catherine Marsh's great desire to meet Professor, afterwards Sir James, Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform, was gratified. She had a good reason for this wish, for in visiting a patient in the Cancer Hospital in London she had found, to her distress, that chloroform was not allowed to be used there. His benevolent heart was deeply moved, and he promised to do his best to have the matter set right. Accordingly, the following night he went to

London, had a conversation with the head surgeon, and returned with all speed to Edinburgh, happy with the promise that it should always be offered to the patients. He sent the good news to Catherine Marsh, and it lifted a heavy weight from her heart.

In the winter of 1864 Dr. Marsh had so serious an illness that hope for his recovery had almost been given up, when this letter was written to Caroline Maitland :

“These are deep waters, but the promise is kept, ‘I will be with thee.’ My father has a lovely realization of his Saviour’s nearness to him. *They* are walking hand in hand through this Jordan. Pray for us—life and love seem bound up with him, but the Lord Jesus is welcome to have his sweet society, if He wishes for it—it is His blood-bought right, and I do like the Lord Jesus to have my best Delight.”

In the spring, when her father was well on his way to recovery, Catherine Marsh had the following letter from Mr. Froude :

“My dear Miss Marsh,—I have left your kind letter all this time unanswered. I waited to write to you till I was out of the rush and work of London in the quiet of West-cliff. Business, however, sticks to me like a shadow and I write now rather because I will not delay longer, than that I have more leisure for quiet thought. We have several times proposed an expedition to Beckenham, but something has always interfered. In the whirl of modern life we have to use our few moments just to sit down and gather breath again.

“I had not heard of your father’s illness, but, of course, I had heard much of him and I knew his age. Such men as he help to keep England green and beautiful. It is happy when the sun of such a life sets in the fulness of its time, and goes down with a cloudless horizon. The colouring is ever fairest in the mornings and the evenings—as the interests of earth fade away the light is all in the sky.

“I should much like to see your father, and yet new faces at such times are better kept away. If your hopes

are justified and he has really rallied again, I will run down after I return to London, and see you for a few hours. Henrietta sends her very best love, and with my own warmest regards, I remain, most truly yours, J. A. FROUDE."

Dr. Marsh's recovery was so complete, that when the time came for keeping his eighty-ninth birthday it was welcomed with even more than its usual gladness, for there was nothing to foreshadow that it would be the last of those much-loved days.

"It was one of the sunniest days of that brilliant summer, friends gathered round him from far and near to wish him joy on entering his 90th year." Among the guests were Lord Shaftesbury, the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Longley), the young Duchess of Sutherland, his new friend, and Lord and Lady Mayo, his old friends, a beloved sister of Hedley Vicars with her husband (the Rev. Leonard Burrows), Mr. Henry Venn of the Church Missionary Society, bringing Dr. Crowther, the first black Bishop, to receive Dr. Marsh's blessing; many relations and many neighbours. Brigadier-General Colin Mackenzie, who came with Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers, had brought his two Afghan servants¹—who had entreated not to be separated from their master—and as they took their places behind Dr. Marsh's wheel-chair, dressed in their scarlet turbans, and dark blue robes, they added to the picturesqueness of the scene on the terrace in front of the Rectory, from which he gave his address to his guests assembled on the lawn.

Some years later the Rev. Theodore Irving, one of her American friends, wrote to Catherine Marsh after reading her *Life of her Father*:

"I can enjoy and appreciate it the more since I saw his radiant face which seemed to be looking within the veil, on that lovely summer afternoon when he addressed that visitor congregation on the lawn of Beddington Rectory.

¹ One of these Afghans, Gholam Jan, determined on this day "to be of the same religion as Dr. Marsh," a resolve which was strengthened when he heard of his peaceful departure. After he had been carefully instructed by Mr. Chalmers, who could teach him in his own language, he was baptized by him in Beckenham Church in that language on November 27.

I have a confused recollection of much that I saw in foreign travel, but that scene ever stands out clear and distinct, not a single warm tint has faded out of that beautiful picture."

"The days of that summer glided by," wrote Catherine Marsh, "each one brighter and happier than that which had gone before." On August 16th at the close of the evening, her father's heart overflowed with praise—he sang hymns that he loved, and then a Hebrew melody, "Lord, build thy House speedily."

"There was no undertone in the music of that glad night foreboding that it was the last of long years of happy family evenings, and that none like it remained for us on earth. Little we thought as the beloved voice sank into silence, that his next song of praise would be sung 'with angels and archangels and all the company of Heaven.'"¹

The next day the short illness began, and on the 24th the parting came. "The heart that had so overflowed with love, still beat with tremulous motion; and the hand which clasped the hand of the daughter whose life's blessedness it had been never to be parted from him, closed firmly, as if he would have drawn her into the Promised Land at the same moment with himself, by the power of that 'love which is strong as death.'"² This was her own description of that supreme moment. Thenceforward all life was changed to her—but her father had left a trust in her keeping, which it needed all her devotion to his wishes to enable her to undertake. In his will was this sentence: "I wish my executors to place all my papers and manuscripts and letters, etc., in the hands of my daughter, Catherine, for any use she may wish to make of them."

She understood his wish, and fulfilled it.

Letters of sympathy flowed in a stream during the next few weeks. Mr. French wrote:

"Deep as your sense of personal loss *must* be, it will be merged in the thought of what the parish, and the Church of Christ at large has been bereaved of in his loss. It will be one of the sacred memories of my life to have been per-

¹ *Life of Rev. William Marsh*, by his daughter, p. 554.

mitted to work under him during the year he was walking so near the gates of the Heavenly City."

The Bishop of Rochester in his letter of sympathy touched the note of Hope which always kept its echo in her heart, for he wrote :

"The looking for, and hasting the coming of the Day of God, will not allow sorrow to have a sole supremacy in our hearts, when we are thinking of what our dearest delights have been, and what they are."

Miss Olivia Hodson to C. M. :

"*August 30th, 1864.*—Oh, how I wish I had been permitted to be with you this year, to have looked again on that life of yours with your father amidst all its hallowed joys. I have been living back into those early days at Edgbaston, and through all the intermediate scenes of our intercourse, and this is what I have to say, darling—that only those who have known, and watched, and loved you from the very beginning, who have studied and understood from its earliest stages onwards, your life of unequalled devotion to that most beloved father, who know the rare quality of every period, and every vicissitude through which that union has passed, as it has been my privilege to know it, can understand something of what your filial soul is suffering. I know you will be borne up high in praise and adoration, and realizing joy, but I want to be assured that your heart of tenderness, which I love and revere more than ever, will be sustained. I love you very tenderly, and very thanksgivingly."

C. M. to C. F. M. :

"*Beddington Rectory, September 8th.*—My own Car,—God has mercifully kept our Mary from sinking,¹ and He *is* with us; but Lucy and I feel we scarcely knew that our beloved one was really dead—till they all left us; and we began life again *without him*. It had seemed like a dreadful dream; and when we found we could not awake from it in this world, we began to sink in deep waters, where there was no standing—but the Eternal God is our Refuge, and

¹ Mary Trench was too late to see him again; she was travelling abroad with her husband, and had missed letters and telegrams.

an undying Saviour holds us up. Write and love me on my sad birthday. Love comforts me—and there are souls for whom Christ died, to be won for Him.”

C. F. M. to C. M. :

“*Stansted, September 21st, 1864.*—My own Marny,—Your note this morning goes to my heart. So *great* a love must be broken with very great pain. I shall be glad for your sake when you come away from the rooms and things that speak of the Past, all over now. The time may be short, but the pain of separation is a terrible reality. I trust the worst is over—that you will not again be allowed to go down quite so deep as at that first coming back to the empty rooms, and every day brings you nearer to the great rejoicing, but yours was no common love, and had no common object; O Katie, I am your Car.”

The two months during which the Rectory was still their home were nearly over when Catherine Marsh and her niece were earnestly asked by Mrs. Trench to come to Islip Rectory for a few days. While they were there Mr. O’Rorke wrote to Catherine Marsh that he was having a foretaste of what the sadness of life would be without them both. The deepening of his own spiritual life in the friendship with her, and with his old Rector, and his revering love for him, had already endeared him to her. Later on, when she knew of the love that had grown up in his heart for her adopted daughter, and that when he asked for her to be his wife, he asked that her adopted Mother should be his also, for “he would never separate them, and that their home should always be her home,” she felt in the midst of her sorrow the comfort of the new source of love brought into her life, when after the loss of her father it was so greatly needed, and the threefold cord was never broken.

BRIGHTON

VARIOUS INTERESTS AND THE CHOLERA VISITATION AND ITS SEQUEL

1865-1868

"She speaks of Him, her Author, Guardian, Friend,
Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end,
In language warm, as all that love inspires,
And in the glow of her intense desires,
Pants to communicate her noble fires."

WILLIAM COWPER.

THE interval between leaving Beddington and going to Brighton, which was to be their next home, was spent by Catherine Marsh and her niece in long visits to Beckenham Rectory and Balcaskie, and short visits to other relations and friends.

Henry O'Rorke spent the winter in Italy travelling about with his friends, Mr. Laurence of Beddington and his son, the Rev. Percival Laurence.

He returned to England in the early spring, and on April 20th, 1865, there was a double wedding from Beckenham Rectory, when Lucy Marshall was married to Henry O'Rorke, and at the same time Agnes, her youngest sister, Catherine Marsh's much loved niece, was married to Robert Macleod Hawkins, who had been ordained and was working with Mr. Chalmers.

Henry O'Rorke was going to St. Mary's Church, Brighton, which was to be held in charge for Julius Elliott, the youngest son of the late Incumbent, the well-known preacher, Henry Venn Elliott, who though he had only once met Henry O'Rorke, sent the request when he was dying, that he would come to St. Mary's, and be a friend to his son. Julius Elliott was dear to Catherine Marsh,

she had many friends in Brighton and interests there, and as it was easy of access from Beckenham it helped to lessen the trial of beginning life, for the first time, in a home without her father.

Now, that for the last half of her life she was to be in such near association with Henry O'Rorke, it may be well to give a short sketch of his character, and previous life.

His home was in County Galway, and he was a sportsman from his childhood (he shot his first snipe when only eight years old), and from his boyhood he hunted with the Galway Blazers, with his uncle, John Dennis, Master of the hounds. When he was fifteen he entered Trinity College, Dublin, and when he was seventeen his college career was completed; and for the next few years he spent the summer and autumn months with his mother and sisters in their home at Moylough, and the winter and spring in warm climates with his eldest sister, who was in delicate health. They were in Madeira, Austria and Italy. Rome, with its palaces, catacombs, churches, and its rich treasures of art, was familiar ground to him, and he laid up stores of memories, which in after years he often used to enrich and illustrate his sermons. He was a lover of Nature, and had good knowledge of flowers and birds. In those years he was living what would be called "in the world," and sharing its pleasures; but even then he was separated from its more dangerous snares and temptations by a natural power of self-command, and a rare purity of mind and character.

Then a time came when he felt the aimlessness of his pleasant life. His conscience was awakened; and in many a night spent in a boat alone on one of the small loughs in the bog, waiting for the dawn, to shoot wild fowl, he was taught by the Holy Spirit, for he sought no human help, first the sin of wasting time, and then the claim of the Saviour upon his heart and his life. He listened, and obeyed the Heavenly Voice. He decided to take Holy Orders, and set himself by careful study to prepare for it. He was ordained by the Bishop of Lichfield on Trinity Sunday, 1855. He never turned back, nor turned aside,

but to his life's end he was a faithful ambassador for Christ. All that had made him attractive in society, now made him an attractive representative for his Heavenly King. The calm of the spiritual mind which "is life and peace," was clearly seen in his beautiful face.

His preaching was an education to his congregation, for he was a constant and rapid reader on varied subjects: science, history, biography, travels, philosophy and theology, and he was well acquainted with the poets; and the stores in his retentive memory were pressed into the service to which he had devoted his life. He was a diligent student of the Bible, with an ardent desire as he searched it, to know more of God Himself, for with all his heart he echoed the words of the Psalmist, "God, my exceeding joy."

This was the character of him, who thenceforth took the place of a son to Catherine Marsh, and no mother could have a more devoted son than he was to her. There was a striking resemblance between them, in that each possessed a wealth of sympathy that was inexhaustible, and a charm that seemed irresistible, yet at the same time there was a marked contrast between her delightful forth-comingness, and his natural reserve and aloofness; while both alike might have said with truth, "This one thing I do, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

When Catherine Marsh was absent from Beddington, Mr. French had written the following letter to her:

"You would have praised God for a sermon preached last Sunday by dear O'Rorke, which I really coveted, at least the faculty of writing such an one, as one of God's best gifts."

From the Bishop of Manchester: "Your letter carries me right back to Beddington days when Mr. O'Rorke more than any one else made religion attractive to us. I can still remember quite clearly that his were the first sermons that interested me as a boy—my brother and I thought him the best preacher of that group of distinguished preachers in Beddington Church. How he delighted us

boys, when he overtook us on his way to Church, by speaking with us, with his lovely smile. There was something extraordinarily winning about him, a reflection of the bright sunshine of Divine love in which he lived."

While they were at Brighton, D. L. Moody came to England for the first time. He was then a stranger except to a few, but afterwards well-known as the great American Evangelist. A friend of Catherine Marsh's heard him give an address, and told her of his remarkable power as a speaker. She and Henry O'Rorke consulted with Lord and Lady Radstock, who were then living and working in Brighton, and with Stevenson Blackwood and his wife, who were staying there, and it was arranged between them that Moody should be asked to come and give two addresses, and the Town Hall was taken for the purpose. He came, and a great stir and awakening followed on his powerful Gospel appeals. For some weeks afterwards meetings of the same kind were continued in a large room in the Pavilion, the principal speakers were Mr. Hay McDowal Grant of Arndilly, Mr. Brownlow North, Lord Radstock, and Mr. Blackwood. The meetings were crowded, and a great blessing was given, many were brought to decision to live for Christ, sometimes a whole family was changed; and Catherine Marsh, true to her name of Greatheart, was a wise guide to many young pilgrims who were setting out on their journey to the Celestial City.

When the meetings were ended, she left Brighton to pay some visits, and wrote from Terling, on *August 4th* :

"To-day Lady Franklin came with Queen Emma of the Sandwich Isles, and her suite. A large party had been invited to meet them. Queen Emma has jet black hair, large fawn-like black eyes, and her complexion is only like a very dark brunette's, she is quite handsome and in manner gentle, soft and dignified. After luncheon when we had all adjourned to the drawing-room, Lord Rayleigh called upon me to tell her some stories. I lifted up my heart for direction, and then told of some of the wonders of God's grace that I had seen and known; and she clasped both

my hands afterwards, and said she 'had loved to hear it.' She has lost her husband, and her only son. Oh, that if she does not already know Him, she may find a Saviour now.

"Some of the visitors were very friendly, some of the younger ones are very stiff and *young ladyish*, but they may have some little souls somewhere out of sight, so I shall go on trying to talk to their *tranced* bodies! but it is hard work."

Then she went on to Scotland for her usual round of visits, and her old love of the sea comes out in a letter from Slains. "To-day we leave the sea-girt Castle, and hear no more the breaking of the waves on the rocks beneath. The life and movement of the sea gives me such a feeling of companionship, that no number of hours spent alone on its shore could make me feel desolate."

Thence she went to Keith Hall, where daily meetings had been arranged for her, in the town of Inverurie, and in the Keith Hall barn. She found others at work here, for she wrote: "Lord Cavan, and Willie Aitken,¹ came to help—so I went on first, and spoke to the people alone, refusing to go with the others lest we should be mistaken for a company of strolling players: they were delightful and helpful companions, and Madeleine is dearer than ever."

Then she went on to Haddo House, whence she wrote:

"I could write *biographies* of dear Lady Aberdeen, her loveliness and her gentle dignity charm my eye, and her tranquil faith and life of good deeds, help my spirit. She met us on the broad flight of steps in front of the house, and then she took me to my room and told me it was where the Queen had slept! There was a sitting-room adjoining it, prepared for me, and in my heart I asked that it might be a little temple for God's glory to shine into souls there. Lady Aberdeen read me several passages out of her husband's journal, and spoke to me of her fear lest the *universality* of love in Heaven, should sever the old ties of earth, and I told her I felt sure that *all* that is best in love

¹ Now Canon of Norwich.

must be immortal, and of how one *sees it* by its intensity increasing as the spirit ripens for glory, and nears the eternal shore. We understand each other, as only those do, who know that their sorrow may have merciful alleviations, but there is no perfect cure for it until the Resurrection morning."

"*Logie Elphinstone, October 12th.*—To-day Harriet Leslie sent her carriage to Keith Hall to bring us here, and Harriet gave us the warmest welcome, she is exactly her old self, a most charming woman. Colonel Dalrymple ("Black Dal" of the Guards) and his wife were there, it was a great pleasure to meet them. Then dear old Lady Elphinstone asked me to come to her room at night, and told me (and *how* it went to my heart!) that for years she has desired that I may be with her when she is dying. I said that as she is only 83, I saw no earthly reason why we should not go up together at the Coming of the Lord, and she liked the thought. Harriet was waiting in my room, and met me with, 'Well, Marsh (!), my darling, of course you would not be satisfied to go to bed without lecturing me!' She was most dear, and we had a delightful talk together, that made me feel her time of illness had been a time of real blessing."

Before returning to England she went to stay at Balcaskie. Gina Hardy was there also.

C. M. to L. E. O'R.:

"Sunday was the Scottish Sacramental Sabbath, and it was the first opportunity given me of *enlarging my borders*, by joining with the members of the Scotch Established Church at the Table of the Lord. Gina and I had our *tokens* given us, and we went with Bob and Louie to St. Monan's Church, which was filled by the fishermen and their wives. The service and the addresses were very solemn, yet very simple, and I never felt the Presence of the Lord Jesus nearer at any Communion."

It was at this time that Dr. Boyd ("A. K. H. B.") asked her to come and give an address at St. Andrews. Gina Hardy has described this evening: "After dining with the Boyds, we walked to the Hall, and entering saw hundreds

of people, and a platform of gentlemen. Afterwards Katie said to me, she had just to pray that she might forget all the surroundings, and I never heard her speak with more calm power."

Dr. Boyd wrote the following description of this meeting :

"Only let it be said that it was a very interesting event, when the saintly Catherine Marsh was persuaded to give an address in the large room of the Madras College on the evening of November 16, 1865, to a larger number than she quite approved. About 800 were packed into the west room including a good many professors, and Miss Marsh spoke beautifully for about an hour. Sitting, according to her wont, speaking with perfect fluency in a rich contralto voice, she made herself heard in every corner. That most admirable woman disclaims the idea of anything like preaching. Both here and in Edinburgh I was so happy as to get her to give addresses, and I can but say (what all readers of *English Hearts and Hands* will believe) that for pathos, and interest, and deep impressiveness, I never heard a finer speaker."

It was said of her that if she had been a man, and a Member of Parliament, in all probability she would have been one of the finest orators of the day.

To her niece at Brighton, she wrote :

"How I longed for Henry to speak to the number of people Dr. Boyd had got together last night at St. Andrews. It would have been lovely for them to have heard his voice speaking his Master's message in his clear, blessed way. Still I do hope a breath of Heaven blew through my penny tin trumpet, and I had a wonderful joy by a dying man's bedside just before."¹

At the beginning of 1866 *Day Dawn* was published, and many letters about it came to gladden her heart. Her old friend, Charles Prowett, wrote :

"I have read it several times, it seems to me to give in the fewest possible words, the essence of Christianity and of Christian philosophy."

¹ This is told in her little book, *Day Dawn*. Nisbet & Co., London.

The Chaplain of Lewes Prison wrote :

"Some unknown friend sent me a copy of *Day Dawn* which proved to be a providential help to me, and to an unhappy man awaiting his just execution at a time when he felt the need, but could not realize the truth of God's free pardon offered to the guiltiest sinner. It decided the matter to him, and he begged me to thank you, which I promised to do."

From Glebe Pinjarrah, West Australia, July 15th, 1869 :

"I am a clergyman, holding a Government Chaplaincy. My dear mother sent me your little book *Day Dawn*. I was deeply impressed with it, read it, and re-read it. Since then it has become known to many in my very widely scattered parish. It has given comfort to sick and dying men and women, by bringing the great truths of the Bible to their hearts and consciences. God's Spirit was with you when you wrote that little book. I have sent for more copies, and I pray the same Spirit to bless them wherever they are distributed.—Yours faithfully, JAMES STUART PRICE."

No greater joys could be given her than those which she tells of to her niece, Lucy O'Rorke :

"Just come back from such an interesting meeting this evening with 150 Bible women. Dear Mrs. Ranyard told me so kindly, that under God's blessing I had set her to work to set up Bible women. I never dreamt of such an honour—but it is all my Lord's goodness, and—all the praise shall be His.

"Then Miss Agnes Weston¹ has written that she has a steady class of between 50 and 60 working men, and that she believes it has been a blessing to many of them, and she adds, 'It was *English Hearts and English Hands* first put the idea into my head of trying to do something for the working men.'"

Much of her time through this year was spent in writing the *Life* of her father; this kept all that she had lost constantly before her, and also she felt it involved a great responsibility. But she knew she was carrying out his wishes, and to do this had been the habit of her life. She

¹ Her book, *My Life among the Blue Jackets*, tells of the great work she was afterwards enabled to carry out.

threw into the sacred task all her energy of love and prayer, and had made good progress towards its completion, when a call came which she could not refuse, to lay it aside in a great measure for a time.

In July of this year, 1866, she was staying at Stafford House, and one day, when the evening papers came in, the Duke of Sutherland read aloud the account of the sudden and alarming increase in the number of deaths from cholera in the East of London, and of the overcrowded state of the London Hospital, where the sufferers were sent.

In a wakeful night, with much prayer for God's guidance, she made her decision. In those days cholera was still, by many people, thought to be infectious. Therefore, as soon as breakfast was over, she bade good-bye to her host and hostess and their guests, explaining that as she was going to the London Hospital she could not return to be amongst them.

The emergency was great, the doctors and nurses, working splendidly, were almost worn out, and outside help was welcomed. She asked to be allowed to stay in the hospital. This could not be, but it was arranged that she should sleep at Beckenham Rectory, and return to London by an early train in the morning.

She wrote: "It is impossible to describe the effect of a first entrance into these wards. They seemed a labyrinth of the dying of all ages, from the golden-haired child to the grey-haired man, in which that 'black death' was grasping its victims with an iron hand. Yet the agony was endured in silence, with a noble fortitude in almost every case where reason could hold her sway.

"There was a general willingness to hear the short, strong messages of life and peace, such as, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.' And I cannot but cherish the hope that the hospital was to many a soul the gate of Heaven—by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." ¹

¹ There is a short account of this time in her little book, *Death and Life*. Nisbet & Co., London.

She was welcomed by the Chaplain, the Rev. Thomas Scott, of whom she wrote that "he devoted himself unceasingly to ministering to the sick and the dying," while the doctors and nurses were equally devoted in their efforts to alleviate, when they could not cure, their sufferings.

One day, when she was kneeling in prayer by a dying man, a stranger who had been standing silently in the ward drew near, and knelt at the foot of the bed. The prayer ended, he said he was in command of a training ship, and had come to ask if there were any orphan boys he could take on board to train. She referred him to the Chaplain, but he still lingered beside her, and she ventured to ask him if he could die in the same trust and peace, as the man by whom they were standing, who had just yielded up his soul to his Saviour. "No," replied the stranger in firm, sad tones, "it would be impossible for me." There was only time for a few earnest words, and then she gave him her own little pocket Testament, marking 1 John i. 7 and v. 11—and asked him to study it.

A fortnight later, as she was kneeling by another dying bed, she was aware that some one was kneeling also, by a voice joining in the prayer. It was the same officer, but his face was changed. He asked if he could speak to her for a moment, then, taking the Testament from his pocket, he said, "Now I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, and my Saviour," and opening it he pointed to the verses she had marked. For thirty-six years he continued his faithful service for Christ amongst sailors, till failing health obliged him to give up active work; then in his last letter to her, he wrote: "I try to help on all I can from my desk instead"—and the letter ended with the words, "Cholera Wards, 1866." A little later, sitting in his armchair, for he was unable to lie down—with his Bible, his constant companion, by his side, he fell asleep, and awoke in Eternity.

The interests of that solemn time were many and great, but two of them call for a special description. "What will become of my children?" was the cry of misery from some dying parent, while other fathers and mothers were

heard praying for their children with their latest breath. Then Catherine Marsh's promise to those dying ones that their children should be cared for, soothed their distress, or strengthened their faith, and left her with the charge of between forty and fifty little orphans, when the visitation of cholera came to an end.

Beckenham was to be their haven of refuge, and Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers undertook to be their foster parents.¹ Home life was kept up for them in a large old-fashioned house, with the addition of an iron house in the garden. The families were not separated, all the children went to the excellent church schools; the girls were taught to wash and mend for the boys, who, in their turn, learnt to black the boots and carry the coals, and all helped in the house and the garden, while a good and capable matron and sub-matron mothered them. This family system had excellent and happy results. The children looked upon it as home, and when they went out to service, or to be taught a trade, they were not lost sight of, but correspondence was kept up with them. In all seventy orphans were received in it—some sad cases came in later when there were vacancies. This little letter, from one orphan to another, is taken from many that were written :

"I hope you are a good girl to Miss West and Christina who do everything for your happiness and comfort. I can fancy *you* all so happy, and *me* not amongst you. I did not know how much I loved you all before I left."

After Catherine Marsh's death the following note came from another of these orphans :

"I can never forget the dear friends I had, and happy time I spent in the iron house of the Orphanage at dear old Beckenham when I was a boy, and many a time I have been at the Rectory, with dear Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers, and took their big dog out for a run."

But it is by the other of these two interests that Catherine Marsh will be longest remembered, for she was almost, if not actually, the first to plan and to carry out the plan, of a Convalescent Home.

¹ Afterwards it was carried on by subscriptions.

It was at this time that the names of Mrs. Tait, the wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury, of Mrs. Gladstone, and of Miss Marsh, were linked together as the "Three Catherine's" in some of the daily newspapers. The call had come almost simultaneously to each of them, to venture upon the same benevolent undertakings; Orphanages and Convalescent Homes, good works that have gone on ever since, growing and spreading and being of untold use and blessing to numbers.

During the four months' prevalence of cholera, whilst most of her days were spent in the hospital, part of the nights had to be given up to transacting the absolutely necessary business for the convalescents and the orphans.

It was seeing the pitiable state of those who had to be sent out of the hospital, though utterly unfit to return to their poor homes and their toil, to make room for the crowds of new cases that were constantly being sent in, that determined Catherine Marsh to do something at once for them. She wrote a letter to *The Times* on the subject, which brought funds enough to begin with, and Sir T. Fowell Buxton offered the temporary use of a block of new cottages on his estate, Warlies, close to Epping Forest.

She has described the setting out of the first party of convalescents :

"Seldom has a gladder sight been seen at a hospital's door than the pale but joyful faces of those who filled the large open conveyance that was to take them to Warlies. A crowd of draymen, artizans, coster-mongers, errand boys, women and children waited at the gates to see the start. Many times in those awful weeks those gates had been opened for the dead to be borne away, and strong hearts had trembled as coffin after coffin was brought out. What wonder that a shout of hearty sympathy arose at this happy departure of the first band of convalescents."

Everything prospered in the cottages at Warlies; but for a permanent Convalescent Home, Brighton was thought to be the best.

She wrote to Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton :

"How generous it was of you to think of having near

you the convalescents from the Cholera Wards, of whom so many are afraid, though doctors tell me their fears are groundless. Do, dear friends, join me in earnest prayer that God would choose a house for us, where the two desires of our hearts, the temporal and the spiritual welfare of our patients, should be advanced. How He *did* hear my cry, when He inclined your heart (even *before* I called upon Him) to offer your cottages, and then to provide the attendance of a good Scripture reader."

Two houses close to the Downs and facing the sea, at the east of Brighton were taken, and made ready with all speed; and thus it came to pass that Blackrock Convalescent Hospital was established. She always retained the headship of her Convalescent Homes, and while she lived in Brighton, she often visited the patients, and had Bible Readings with them.

When the dreadful visitation had ended, she went to stay with Louisa Anstruther at Balcaskie. She needed the bracing of Scottish air, and a quiet time and place for finishing the writing of her father's *Life*.

On November 7th she wrote to her sister :

"I am trying very hard to finish this MSS. this week, and have got as far as November 1862 now. I give myself wholly to the work, and though I sat up till nearly 3 o'clock last night, and was awake again by 6 this morning, I could only answer 5 out of that fearful heap of letters."

Dr. Marsh's *Life* was published early in January 1867. There were many kindly notices and reviews of it, but as *The Guardian's* appreciation gave Catherine Marsh special pleasure a short extract from it is quoted here, followed by a few letters from her friends and others telling her what the book was to them.

From *The Guardian* :

"In the biography of Dr. Marsh by the loving hand of his daughter, it is impossible to contemplate the portrait, soft as some picture of the Saviour by Correggio or Carlo Dolce, and finished up to perfection by the most delicate and loving handling, without admiration. It is so

benignant, so full of heavenly charity, such simple, soul-filling faith, such roundness and completeness in its purely Christian type."

Her old friend, Mrs. Acklom, wrote :

"The *Life* is the joy of my days. Such exquisite writing, and the subject of it shining in lustrous light throughout it—his thoughts and words bringing blessing to our hearts. When reading it on Sunday I felt lifted up above the tree-tops—the atmosphere clear and heavenly, and the world under my feet. Yesterday Mr. St. Quintin came to talk over the *Life* with me—he said his wife was away for a few days, and that having begun the book in the morning, he spent the whole day with it, till by night he had finished it, and he said that from his heart he thanked you and blessed you for the book."

Miss Nightingale to C. M. :

"Dear Miss Marsh,—I have only just received your kind note of May 16th, and your very kind thought of me in sending me your account of the extraordinary life of so great and good a servant of God. Need I tell you how much I value it? I am so overworked that I am obliged to make *this*, not illness, except in as far as illness is a hindrance to business, my plea for the savage solitude in which I live, even as to correspondence. The *Life* you have sent me is a delightful help to that solitude. I trust that all your works are going on well, your orphans and your convalescents at Brighton. I don't think there are two works more conducive to Christian progress than these. May I send you a very small sum (my poverty and not my will consents to its *tininess*) for these, from yours ever sincerely, FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE."

Later on Mr. Woolner (the sculptor) wrote : "A thousand thanks for the book. I feel as if reading the life of an Angel, your father's goodness and gentleness are so perfect. Could I say more in a volume?"

Three years later a letter from the Rector of St. John's Church, Georgetown (D.C., U.S.A.), gave her great comfort, for he wrote :

"Few books have been more blessed to our young clergy

and candidates for orders, than the Biography of your sainted Father."

C. M. to the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone :

"*January 4th*, 1868.—My dear Sir,—May I venture to ask you to be so very kind as to accept a copy of my memorials of a most beloved Father. Had you known him, (how often I have wished that you had,) and seen the charm of his countenance and character, and 'beauty of holiness,' you would say of the book, as many have written to me, that 'the half has not been told' in it. I am so sorry to find that the copy sent me has a mark on its cover—but if I wait for another, you will not get it by Sunday—and if you please I wish very earnestly that you would begin to read it to-morrow. Will you pardon the great liberty I have taken, and believe me, dear Sir, yours truly obliged, CATHERINE MARSH."

[*The reply.*]

"Dear Miss Marsh,—Allow me to thank you on my wife's behalf and my own for your very kind and very acceptable gifts. I had been much struck by glimpses of your Father's beautiful character which were afforded by a review of your work, and your injunction to me to begin the work at once was one with which I found it very easy to comply. An opposite injunction, to refrain from beginning it, would have placed me in some difficulty. I now leave off at Mr. Sandys' most interesting and evidently lifelike account of his Rector, to render to you the thanks which I must otherwise have postponed to another post, and before bedtime I hope to be well advanced in the volume. Do not be displeased if I send you, when it is completed, a paper which I have written on the volume called *Ecce Homo*, and of which a part has appeared in the January number of *Good Words*.—Allow me to remain with much respect, Faithfully yours, W. E. GLADSTONE. *Hawarden Castle, January 5th*, 1868."

From C. M. :

"*January 8th*, 1868.—Dear Mr. Gladstone,—How shall I thank you as I would for the great kindness of your letter. I firmly believe that there never was anything quite so

pleasant in any letter as that bit about Mr. Sandys—it made it so *real* to me that you were reading that book, and kindly caring for it.

“ You will understand that it could not be written, the latter part especially, without great pain. But it would have helped me through many a strain of heart, if I could have foreseen that you would read it so heartily and kindly. Thank you for promising to send me your review of *Ecce Homo*, it will deeply interest me. Passages from that book were read to me when it first came out—passages of such singular beauty that though others which I have since read in it keenly pained me—I never can remember that book and its writer without praying that he may behold that Man Who was ‘altogether lovely’—‘God over all, blessed for ever.’ May I take advantage of your kindness to ask one more favour from you? It is one I would ask if I were on my dying bed (and I should have a thousand times more courage to do so then). Will you keep these little suggestions for prayer where you can see them every day, and *if* you have not yet come triumphantly through the thoughts of the *first* with ‘thanks be unto God Who giveth us the victory,’ will you read John v. 24 and 1 John v. 8 to 13, and John iv. 10 and 14, and see whether thanks for *Life Eternal given*—given for a thought, a thought of trust in the Saviour—is not to be thanked for, as *soon* as the gift is asked for, and thanked for as inalienable—because ‘the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.’

“ I should not dare to dream of writing this to you but for the wonderful kindness of your letter, and but for having prayed for a long while past that you might amidst the burden of your great duties and cares for the kingdom (which must press upon you nearly as much whether or not holding office), find repose for your spirit in that trust which alone (I believe) can bring ‘the Peace which passeth understanding.’—With deep respect believe me, dear Mr. Gladstone, yours most gratefully, CATHERINE MARSH.”

Several of the incidents that happened at this time were told by her in two of her shorter books, *Shining Light* and

The Rift in the Cloud. A few details which belong to the closing chapter in the latter book give it an additional interest, for the writer of the following letter was a well-known and talented woman, who having been led to join the Church of Rome, was using every endeavour to persuade others to do the same :

“Miss Marsh, the well known staunch Protestant but liberal Christian, constantly visited William, and read and prayed with him in the common sympathy of their Christian faith and trust. After all was over, and the room was decorated, and the body laid out, Miss Marsh came to see him, and taking his dead hand she placed a white camellia in it. Then kneeling by the bed she offered up the most beautiful prayer aloud. There was only one thing left out, she never mentioned our blessed Lady. I was standing at the foot of the bed with a crucifix, and when she ceased praying I said, ‘You have never spoken of our Lady, I cannot let our Lady be passed over.’ And Miss Marsh was not angry, she only rose from her knees, and coming to me she threw her arms round my neck and said, ‘Do not let us dispute upon this now, we have one God, and one Saviour in common, let us rest upon these.’ And she came to see me afterwards when I was ill in London. She was the one person William wanted, any one else might have driven him back—she was daily praying by his side, handsome, enthusiastic, dwelling only on the love of God, and she helped him on till he began really to think the love of God the only thing worth living for.”

Earlier in this year she heard of the serious illness of Mrs. Acklom, who was living at Hastings, and at once she went to her. The short extract that follows shows what her presence could be at the time of sickness and suffering—

Mrs. Acklom to C. M. :

“It seems like a golden dream, that blessed week with you. It was such a tender kindness from the Lord, I was so happy, and how sweet, how lovely, how blessed you were no words can say. *Two* letters from you to-day ! were so comforting, my mind pictures you every hour.”

Later on she returned to Hastings, and was with

Mrs. Acklom and her children until her death. Towards the close of the year, in answering a letter of Mr. Gladstone's, she gives a description of this time :

"*December 22nd, 1868.*—Dear Mr. Gladstone,—How wonderful that you should have the great kindness to remember me in the midst of all that is now pressing upon you. For eleven months I have been thinking (and not *only thinking*) whether I could take courage to write to you again at the end of the year, and now you have given it me. I have wished much to tell you about my beloved friend, Mrs. Acklom—you will remember her as Marianne Fellowes.¹ I was with her day and night for some little time before the end came, and can never recall it without thanking God for letting me be with her. She was as charming in her way of dying, as of living. Her pleasant wit sparkled like jewels, and she seemed as content and happy in the midst of her terrible sufferings, as a child in its mother's arms. Yet her soul was filled with holy reverence for the faith which was her life—or rather for Him from Whose living Heart she drew, without ceasing, the strength and freshness of her own. I think she saw the shining ones who came down to the further side of the river to welcome her, as clearly as Christian and Hopeful could see their friends in that delightful story which she loved to the last. Just a little while before she died I said to her, 'Now that you are so far down into the waters have you any fear?' 'Fear,' she answered, lifting up her wonderful eyes for the last time, 'how can I? Jesus has redeemed me, done everything for me. He has led me all my life long—and shall I be afraid to cross a little dark passage with Him?' I was so glad and thankful to hear her pray for you, dear Mr. Gladstone, much the same prayer that I have prayed so long. A little of it comes into a short prayer on a card for 1869. I shall venture to send it to you for New Year's Day. God bless you.—Yours very sincerely and gratefully, CATHERINE MARSH."

To this letter Mr. Gladstone replied :

"Many years have passed since I saw Mrs. Acklom,

¹ She was a connection of his by marriage.

but I have a most pleasing recollection of her, and your account of her character and her death cannot be read without delight."

Catherine Marsh was at home again in Brighton now, and she wrote to Lady Rayleigh :

"*January 3rd, 1868.*—What is this which Mr. Burrows writes about, 'the plague-stricken Terling villagers.' Let some one write and tell me what it means. I am getting rather knocked up with the quantity of work here lately, and 481 letters have I sent out this week, and 300 have been sent out for me from Beckenham, though most of them had only writing on cards it was an exhausting business."

To the reply, telling of the visitation of fever through which their village was passing, and of what was being done to alleviate the distress, and it was everything that was possible, she wrote :

"My precious Clara and very dear Lord Rayleigh,—Little I knew what was going on around you, and what need for fervent prayer, but I am expecting that you will see a glorious harvest of spiritual blessing after this sorrowful and solemn time of seed-sowing. I long to tell you about the bits of work, and the encouragements in it, lately, but still more about the blessed *nearness* of the Master's Presence and Fellowship of late, with a heavier sense than ever of the depth of my loss in the precious presence and fellowship of my blessed Father. The Lord Jesus is making me *live* upon His actual felt and enjoyed Presence in a way I never dreamt of before, and is fulfilling His promise, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'"

The Brighton time drew to a close before their third year was quite completed. Julius Elliott, now in full orders, had come to take his father's place in St. Mary's Church, but he asked Henry O'Rorke to stay on with him, and for a few months they worked together as an elder and younger brother would; and Julius often sought counsel of her whom he called his "mother friend." He had never known his own mother, as she died when he was

an infant. Their letters show the fellowship of heart that united them.

C. M. to Julius Elliott :

"Your letter filled my heart with thanksgiving to our God. This is your first Sunday in your new sphere of duty.¹ I am praying you may be kept very close to our Blessed Saviour, and daily and hourly have more of Him in your heart, on your lips, and in your life, and set the Lord always before you, and because He is at your right hand you shall not be moved.

"Not be moved from trust in the finished work of Christ alone for salvation, nor from dependence upon the guidance of God the Holy Spirit by His Word.

"Not be moved from the simplicity of Gospel statement, and of Evangelical practice and customs.

"Not be moved from the strength of Protestant feeling—vitally important at the present time when the Papal encroachment is coming on like a cyclone wave, and England is throwing down her sea-wall in the face of it.

"Do tell me what you have to do directly for souls—face to face with them—in sick-visiting, cottage readings, and prayer meetings, as well as your regular services."

Julius Elliott to C. M. :

"A thousand thanks for your lovely long letter. Did you ever feel when you wished to speak most warmly your words were coldest? I am feeling that sadly. Putting myself in the place of my audience, I could hardly believe that I cared for, or knew anything about those glorious truths which *are* everything to me.

"Could I not come to hear you address the 200 soldiers and their wives? I would sit 'in the dark,' or do anything else that might seem desirable, I want you to tell me how you speak. May you be the means of bringing about our Lord's coming into many hearts."

C. M. to Julius Elliott :

"Easter Monday, 1865. Amidst the sorrowful memories of past Easter Days—and amidst the rising hope of the

¹ His first Rector was the Rev. Ashton Oxenden, afterwards Bishop of Montreal.

nearing of the *Great Easter Day*—one prayer above all others fills my soul—‘that I may know Jesus and the power of His Resurrection’—above and beyond (utterably) all I have ever yet known of Him or of that power. Let us ask that ‘the spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead’—may raise us up afresh to walk with Him in newness of Life. What fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost one needs day by day and hour by hour. Let us think that hour wasted (comparatively) in which we have not sought and found a draught of the Living Water—(a drop, at all events).

“My blessed father used to say: ‘Seek to do every act of service for your Master under a fresh, constraining sense of His Love.’ And—oh, for a lift up to a higher level—higher and higher still—where we may walk in closer ‘Fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ,’ and see through clearer air, the Face of the ‘Altogether Lovely.’”

Julius Elliott to C. M.:

“It is Sunday night, I have been preaching from Romans x. 21: ‘All day long I have stretched forth My Hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.’ And knowing that what was written of the Jews, is also true of us, I rejoiced to throw myself afresh, and I begged my fellow-sinners to do the same—into those loving outstretched Arms, and I loved to feel them folding me to His Heart, and cherishing me, I loved to feel them above me, sheltering me from all danger, I loved to feel the everlasting Arms underneath me, to support me under all trials.

“And—when I had done preaching, it seemed to me as if I had told them *nothing* of God’s love, so that I could find no comfort till I prayed your prayer, (do you remember teaching it to me): ‘Blot out my blunders,’ so you will see you have been with me to-day, and helping and blessing.”

In the following year Julius Elliott went to Switzerland for some Alpine climbing. He was an experienced mountaineer, and would never be roped. On July 27th

he and a friend, Mr. Phipps, went up the Schreckhorn. They had good guides, and Mr. Phipps was roped to his. That night he wrote to Julius's eldest sister, Miss Elliott, a letter of deep sympathy and he told her then, "I never saw Julius in such spirits, continually expressing his delight. He wished to go more quickly than I could follow, and he reached the highest peak, going with his marvellous speed. When I reached the 'Col,' and saw him above me, he greeted me with a shout, and then sprang to the rocks, from the snow. He slipped and fell—it was a gentle slip, but he slid over the snow at an increasing pace. He tried in vain to stop himself, and to our inexpressible horror we saw him fly down the snow some 4000 feet.

"I have really loved your brother, and more and more admired his beautiful character—it has been truly said of him, 'No man ever lived better prepared to die.'"

The search party found the body of Julius Elliott, lying on the snow as if in a peaceful sleep. In his pocket was his little well-worn prayer book, and inside it Catherine Marsh's card of prayer for the year, which he had evidently used constantly for intercessory prayer for several friends whose names he had placed in smallest handwriting on the margin. His grave is in the churchyard at Grindelwald.

There was a strange coincidence in connection with his death. When the accident happened in Switzerland, Henry O'Rorke in his home in Shropshire, awoke with the cry, "I have seen Julius falling from a mountain, and I tried in vain to save him," and soon a telegram confirmed the truth of his vision. This was not the only time when he was aware of an event that was occurring far away.

Just before they left Brighton, Catherine Marsh was walking along the parade with her niece, and noticing a working-man at the top of a very high ladder, in what seemed to her a most dangerous position, she said, "Let us ask that he may get down safely," and standing still she lifted up her heart in a short prayer, and waited to see the answer, which quickly came. Then she stepped forward

and told him she had prayed for his safety, spoke a few words of the way to be safe in life, or death, by trusting in the Saviour, gave him a little book and a Soldier's Prayer, and they passed on.

About eleven years later, a clergyman, who came to Sheriff Hales for a Sunday, told her he had been talking with a fellow passenger who came from Brighton and had mentioned a bricklayer he knew there who was living a truly Christian life and being a help to others; and that the beginning of the change in him was from a strange circumstance, and then he related this incident adding the sequel. The bricklayer said that scarcely had the lady gone out of sight, before he thought "Can a stranger care to pray for me, and I never pray for myself! It is high time I began." And he did begin from that day.

SHERIFF HALES

COUNTRY LIFE—LITERARY WORK AND CORRESPONDENCE—
THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR, ETC.

1869—1879

“Blessing she is; God made her so,
And deeds of week-day holiness
Drop from her noiseless as the snow;
Nor hath she ever chanced to know
That aught was easier than to bless.

She is a woman; one in whom
The spring-time of her childish years
Hath never lost its fresh perfume,
Though knowing well that life hath room
For many blights, and many tears.”

J. R. LOWELL.

EARLY in the spring of 1868, when the living of Sheriff Hales with Woodcote had been given to Henry O'Rorke, they left Brighton for their new home in Shropshire.

Many were the regrets for Catherine Marsh. Her stay there had been a happy renewing of friendships connected with her former homes. Mrs. Whitmore, whose dignified beauty had taken her young fancy, was now living at Brighton, and had welcomed her visits. Olivia Hodson was a link with Edgbaston, and she wrote to her, “No words could describe the blank left in my life,” adding that she was “afraid of growing quite mechanical and unkindled” without the help of her friend's faith and love. Leamington was recalled by Lady Georgina Baillie and her daughters, and it was at this time that the eldest, Lady Wynford, formed a strong attachment to her. Lastly there were Emma and Eleanor, the eldest and youngest daughters of Mr. Launcelot Holland of Langley,

Beckenham, and with Emma she had often shared in the good works dear to them both.

She had many new friends also, among these were Mrs. Gordon and her father Mr. Laurence Peel, with whom she had much in common, sharing their intellectual and religious interests. There are many others who cannot be mentioned for lack of space, but the Elliott family must not be omitted: the Rev. Edward Elliott, the learned author of *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, and his wife and daughters, and his sister Charlotte, writer of hymns which are a treasure to the Christian Church, especially the well-known one, *Just as I am*. She lived with her sister Eleanor, the wife of the Rev. John Babington, and they were a happy trio. After Catherine Marsh had gone, Charlotte Elliott wrote to her:

“Brighton has seemed stripped and desolate to me since you left it—perhaps I was in danger of making an idol of you. One after another my bright stars disappear, and you my beloved friend were to me one of the brightest and dearest.”

Catherine Marsh could not but feel the trial of exchanging her home at Brighton where she had many friendships and interests, and where also she was within easy reach of Beckenham and London, for the quiet life of a country village in Shropshire; but she knew that wherever her home might be, she would always find there work to do for her Lord and Master.

There was a delay before she could go to Sheriff Hales, for a new Vicarage was needed, in which a boudoir was to be built for her. She took much interest in the building, arranging, or furnishing of a house, and it was a pleasure to her to make things look pretty, with the least possible expenditure of anything upon herself. After she was living in the new Vicarage, she wrote to her sister:

“The Duchess¹ was here this afternoon, and she was lost in admiration of the beauty of my boudoir! I have had my old faded red cotton velvet screen dyed black,

¹ The Duchess of Sutherland. Lilleshall Hall, which was one of her homes, is in the parish of Sheriff Hales.

and I have caused my maid, under my eye, to tie there-to with narrow ribbons of many colours, quantities of little photographs framed long ago, and old locketts, with New Zealanders' necklaces interspersed, and above all, flowers out of New years' cards, cut out by myself! *growing* amongst the pictures. You can have no idea of its success till you see it.

"Just come back from the village—the poor burnt child but little better—another baby ill, but the clerk's good wife has been prayed back for her husband, after her life was almost despaired of."

The last sentence tells how quickly she had entered with sympathy into the small and unexciting events of village life.

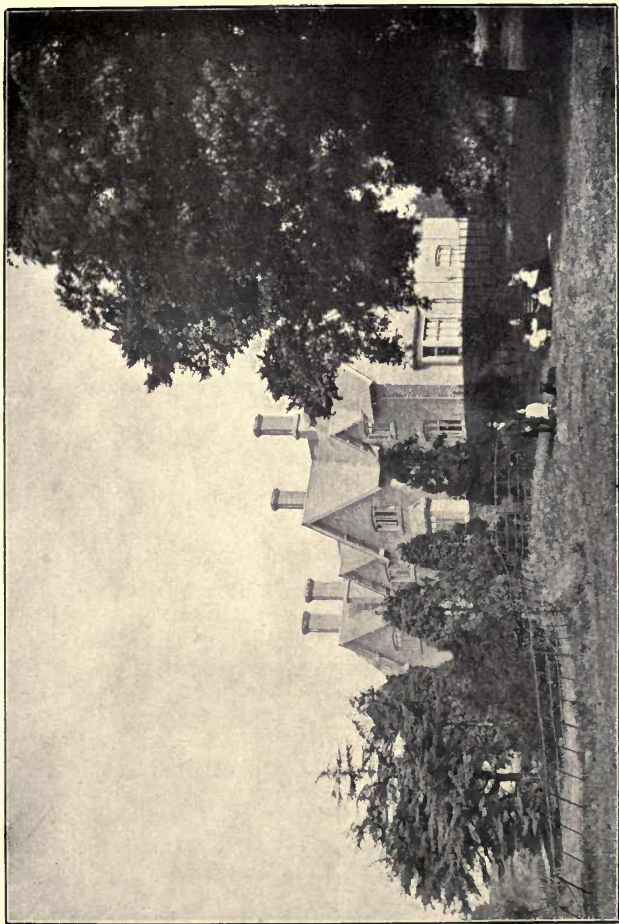
Sheriff Hales Church and Churchyard are on a small rising ground, and across the road is the Vicarage gate. The house is a picturesque one with many gables, standing on a terraced lawn and looking down on the lime avenue leading to Lilleshall Hall. The neighbourhood is a pleasant one, and there were little children in the Vicarage now, a source of happiness to her, then and to the end of her life.

Each Sunday, just after the evening service, she gave a short address in the school-room, Henry O'Rorke going with her, to begin the meeting with prayer. Many of the congregation came with them, and others came who would not go to church, also strangers from neighbouring parishes.

Her correspondence kept her in touch with her old interests, and in the quiet of the country she had more time for writing. Twelve of her smaller books were written in her boudoir at Sheriff Hales. This was an utterly different thing from writing the life of one she loved, with its inevitable pain of heart, for to record what God had wrought was happy work. Then came the pleasure of letters from friends and strangers about the books, like those that follow next.

Rev. S. Butler, an American Missionary, to C. M.:

"*Esquimaux River, Labrador.*—It may interest you to



SHERIFF HALES VICARAGE, SHROPSHIRE.

know that your books have been read, away in this distant Mission field. My congregation is mostly of 'English Hearts and Hands,' and I read a chapter or two of your book in our Sunday school, and then the book was lent hither and thither, till finally it disappeared. I had found it very stimulating and helpful to myself in the earlier period of my Christian life."

Mr. Prowett¹ wrote: "When I am going about, as I have been a good deal lately, I notice in various railway stations, the hardest centres of the world's bustle, that you gather thoughtful readers."

The Rev. Augustus Purday, Chaplain of the London Hospital, to C. M.:

"Of all the charming books that have come under my notice for a long time, not one equals the beautiful life of your Father. So thoroughly was my attention arrested and transfixed, that having begun to read it in the evening, I found myself utterly unable to lay it down—I went on reading it, on and on through the small hours of the night, and finished it as the day began to break. Certainly it was one of the greatest treats I have had for a long time."

J. Davis, a railway guard, to C. M.:

"I so much appreciate the books you very kindly sent me, and return you my sincere thanks. I also have to thank you for your words of comfort to the likes of myself, for I often find encouragement by the same. It is like a spring to my soul in the desert, at the same time praying that I may be a faithful witness for God, and that when I have done His Will on earth I may hear Him say, Come up higher, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Sir George Grey² to C. M.:

"*Falloden, Chathill, November 2nd, 1869.*—Dear Miss Marsh,—It is so long since we heard from you that I am glad of an excuse for writing to ask you how you are, and what you are doing. My immediate object in writing

¹ Charles Prowett, Barrister, of the Temple, Fellow and Lecturer of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, poet, and writer in the *Quarterly Review*, *Fraser's Magazine*, etc.

² Home Secretary.

is to ask you if you have seen the Memoir of Sir William Hamilton. It is a book which perhaps may not have come in your way, but there are a few lines at page 370, dated April 1856, which if you have not seen the book I should like you to read, as they cannot fail to gratify you. He was a great Philosopher and Scholar, his writings are far too deep for me, but I have read the Life with interest and was greatly touched by this, almost the last record of any book¹ he read, and only a fortnight before his death. Who can tell what good your books have been the means of doing? Forgive me if you know all this already.—With our united best regards, believe me, yours very sincerely, G. GREY."

Whenever the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland were at Lilleshall, Catherine Marsh met again many friends, and added others. One of these should have a special mention, Lady John Scott, a well-known and remarkable personality of the Victorian period, who will be remembered longest by her gifts of music and song, for till the melody of "Annie Laurie," which was composed by her, ceases to be sung, she cannot be forgotten. From her first meeting with Catherine Marsh, Lady John Scott regarded her with true admiration and reverent love, and she turned to her with confidence for spiritual help and guidance, and looked forward longingly to her yearly visit to Spottiswood. After one of these visits Lady John wrote to her: "I have a great responsibility this season, the great mercy granted me of having had you here! Will you pray that it may not have been granted me in vain! I wish I could see you oftener, I should so gratefully sit at your feet and learn."

In Sheriff Hales there was not sufficient scope for Catherine Marsh's energies; so she went wherever she knew she could take part in the work to which she had devoted her life, and she often visited her relations and friends. Daily letters passed between her and Louisa Anstruther, and they could have the happiness of being

¹ It was the *Memorials of Captain Vicars*.

together at Balcaskie, and in London also, for Captain, now Sir Robert, Anstruther was in Parliament.

In December, 1868, the appointment of Dr. Tait, Bishop of London, to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, was welcomed by her, and he wrote in answer to her letter :

“Let me thank you very heartily for your letter. It is a great satisfaction to have the sympathy and prayers of Christian people in so grave and solemn a change of life.”

Thus their friendship was renewed, and she followed the work of his Archiepiscopate with a thankful heart.

The deep interest she felt about some of the parliamentary proceedings is seen in her letters to various politicians, or rather, in their replies to hers, as hardly any of such letters of hers are available, excepting those to Mr. W. E. Gladstone. It will be seen that her chief thought in these friendships passed on, far above politics, into the higher plane of the concerns of the spiritual kingdom; this comes out clearly in her correspondence, and especially in that with Mr. Gladstone.

The Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland was now under discussion, and it is well to recall a Roman Catholic Bishop's description of the clergy of the Church about to be disestablished :

“That in every relation of life the Protestant clergy who reside amongst us, are not only blameless, but estimable and edifying. They cannot escape our observation, and sometimes when we noticed their quiet and decorous and modest course of life, we felt ourselves giving expression to the wish, *talis cum sis utinam noster esses!*”¹

Gathorne Hardy,² M.P., to C. M. :

“*Hemsted Park, April 17th, 1868.*—Thirty-four years ago such a question as Mr. Gladstone has raised called forth enthusiastic defenders of the Irish Church. Now I am mortified to see much apathy, and what is perhaps worse—despondency. The fatal word ‘doomed’ is whispered even by you, there is much ground to be won

¹ *Life of Arthur Stanley, Dean of Westminster*, Vol. II. p. 244.

² Afterwards Earl of Cranbrook.

before the citadel falls. The Churchmen of England are fatally mistaken if they allow the enemy to obtain such a point of vantage as the non-existence of an establishment in Ireland will secure."

Lord Cairns to C. M. :

" *March 20th, 1868.*—I must thank you for the ideas and topics in your letter, which make it so different from, and so much more interesting than those which my duty leads me to open in such numbers. It is no small comfort to have the sympathy of any one who can appreciate the load of responsibility, difficulty and danger, which underlies position and dignity, and the assurance of prayer for strength, wisdom, rectitude, and the single eye, and the upholding hand, and the close walk in the secret of His Presence—in the granting of all of which, I feel my only power."

Mr. Gladstone to C. M. :

" *Hawarden, May 25th, 1869.*—Dear Miss Marsh,—I read on Sunday the book¹ you were so kind as to send me. I do not feel myself under any obligation to criticise, while I feel that it is my own fault if I am not much edified, particularly by its closing part. I think I had a kind of promise from you to come to breakfast with us some Thursday at ten, but whether I had or not I ask this favour of you for Thursday, June 3rd, and I hope you will grant it. There will be a Queen's birthday party at our house the night before, at which you would also be most welcome if it suited you to come.—Believe me, sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE."

"If you have not returned to London by the time I mention pray remember us for some subsequent Thursday."

Extract.—C. M. to Mr. Gladstone :

" *July, 1869.*—May I increase my debt of gratitude for your great forbearance with me by suggesting (more humbly than I can say), that if ever shadows fall from passing doubts,—and what thinking mind can be secure from them?—would you take them *at once* to the Man Who has Himself been exercised and tempted—yet Whose

¹ There is no title to tell what book she had sent.

faith did not forsake Him when He felt Himself to be forsaken—it was ‘*My God*’ even then. You cannot confide in Him, and converse with Him on every subject sacred and secular, from hour to hour—without finding Him to be *as real*—as really a living Man, as I found you on Thursday morning. Then, as it is not by physical eyes and ears that this becomes a *certainty*—the Godhead that dwells within and around that Manhood, appeals to our Faith by the Power which has brought us into this *unutterably real* ‘fellowship’ with the Manhood, and has made us know, and love, and trust, and delight in its goodness and greatness, and strength and tenderness. St. Paul who had long since been ‘persuaded’ that nothing in Heaven, Earth or Hell could ‘separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord’—still sets before himself as the object of his most fervent desire—and of his most surpassing efforts—‘that I may *know Him*.’

“Only let us take Him on trust at the outset, and give hearty credit to His word, ‘he that believeth on the Son of God *hath everlasting life*’—‘Come unto Me and I will give you rest.’ Life, which can never be taken away—promised for a thought—a thought of trust in Him. Rest—for an act—the simple act of coming.

“Pray forgive me, only one thought, one wish, one prayer for it is all one, though spread over many years, and including many a blessing, could give me courage to write in this way to you.—Ever, dear Mr. Gladstone, yours most gratefully, CATHERINE MARSH.”

Mr. Gladstone to C. M. :

“11, *Carlton House Terrace, S.W.*, April 9th, 1870.—Dear Miss Marsh,—I thank you for your letter : such words are good for me, almost drowned as I am in cares. But I can assure you that the noble words you quote are what I know ought to be, if they are not, the prayer and aspiration of my heart and that at this time in particular, with the work we have in hand, I ought to pray them not with my lips only but with my whole life. Your kind note will accompany me to Windsor this afternoon. Remember,

I pray you, our breakfasts on Thursdays at ten, after the Easter holidays, and believe me, sincerely yours,
W. E. GLADSTONE."

When the Franco-German War began in July, 1870, Catherine Marsh had the Soldier's Prayer translated into French and German, and an ample supply was printed; but then came the difficulty of getting them to the contending armies. Parcels of a few hundreds were sent to friends, and a few thousands to different hospitals—but this by no means satisfied her, and she wrote:

"The men in the fighting line, who are brave and strong and cheerful one hour—and *dead* the next, are laid so heavily on my heart, that night and day I am asking the Lord to enable us to send the prayers to the Front." Her prayer was soon answered, for she heard through Madame Ernest de Bunsen that Count Andrew Bernsdorff would send the cards to the Front in any number, so the 100,000 ordered in faith were sent at once; and through another channel she was able to send them to the French soldiers. Also her Memorials of Captain Vicars, translated into both languages, were sent in considerable numbers to the hospitals for the wounded.¹ But though her first and foremost thought was for the soldiers' souls, she did not forget their suffering bodies. She wrote:

"It had been much on my mind to do more for the temporal needs of the wounded of whom we were beginning to receive such heartrending accounts—we had been sending through 3 or 4 channels privately what we could spare (or not spare!) ourselves. Then in answer to my request, a letter was written to *The Times*, appealing for a Field Hospital, and it prospered beyond all we had hoped, and brought in thousands for it."

At this time Colonel Loyd Lindsay² devoted himself to the work of the Red Cross Society, and their old friendship was renewed when she wrote to ask him to accept a

¹ During the war 25,025 French and 25,025 German copies were sent out.

² Afterwards Lord Wantage.

supply of cards of prayer to be enclosed in the boxes of comforts which he was sending for the sick and wounded. He replied :

“Your letter deserves a much longer answer than I fear I can give it. However I have done what you suggest, and have written a short letter to *The Times* ; I put in the paragraph to which you allude because I was aware that the German hospitals were running away with much more than those in France. I was so pleased to see your handwriting, and to hear again from one who has been so invariably most kind and friendly towards me.”

C. M. to Colonel Loyd Lindsay :

“*September 17th, 1870.*—Thank you so much for your kind letter. May you be kept from all hurt or harm while carrying out the noble blessed work you are doing for the suffering, and God bless you for it beyond all I can ask Him, and that is *not a little*. How kindly you wrote about the *trinket* I sent. It is such a pleasure to me to have something more to give for those sufferers. On Monday I shall have a few more donations to send for the Field Hospitals. I have tried to wake up everybody I could by private letters and printed appeals. I am sending you the *Life* of my Father. My life has been a very changed thing to me since his death, for *he was my life*.”

In his reply Colonel Lindsay wrote, after thanking her for the gift : “I remember your Father perfectly well. He was a fine gentleman in every sense of the word,” which appreciation pleased her much.

Other friends of hers were also engaged in the same benevolent work: Augusta Fry,¹ grand-daughter of the great Elizabeth Fry, went out to Metz with her cousins Samuel and John Henry Gurney, among the many delegates of “The Society of Friends War Victims Fund.” Their work was to relieve the awful sufferings of the utterly destitute peasants. To add to the misery, small-pox was raging amongst them, many of the relief party took the disease, and one died. They visited the villages all round

¹ Her home had been at Beddington, and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fry, were valued helpers in the good works done in the parish.

Metz, administering temporal and spiritual help to these deeply afflicted ones.

C. M. to a friend :

“ A little while after the French Emperor’s complete defeat, when I had read the deeply touching story of his surrender to the old king of Prussia, I recalled the time when I had met him in Leamington, then Prince Louis Napoleon, an exile, and after asking God’s help I wrote a letter to him, in which I tried to blend respectful sympathy, with an earnest entreaty that he would seek peace and Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Saviour, and with it I sent a copy of my Father’s *Life*, and enclosed the latter, and another copy, with a letter to the Queen of Prussia, entreating of her kindness that my letter and book might be sent to the Emperor.” Count Andrew Bernsdorff replied that the letter and books were being forwarded to the Queen and the Emperor Napoleon; and he added his own thanks for the kind assistance “ to bring the good tidings of the Gospel to the poor wounded soldiers.”

C. M. to the Dowager Countess of Aberdeen, when she had lost two sons, though not in this War :

“ The Lord gave—and the Lord—*only* the Lord—hath taken away—taken to Himself your dearly loved sons. Every prayer you have prayed for them is answered. The brother has met his brother, the father has embraced his sons—the saved are with their Saviour—taken from the world of the dying, to the world of the Alive for evermore. Dear, brave young souls ! Perhaps they have been sent on missions of mercy to those brave men dying by scores of thousands on the fearful battle-fields in France. At all events they are sharing in the joy in the presence of the Angels of God over countless saved souls in the midst of those terrible scenes of slaughter. How peaceful Heaven must be—out of reach of the sights and sounds of agony, and strife, and death, but within hearing of, and seeing the peace, and bliss, and life which our wonder-working God brings out of it all.”

Among the many letters of this time there is a characteristic one from Lord Shaftesbury to C. M. :

“I am more of a Christian than you are, for I write to answer your appeal, though you did not answer my letter ! But you have no leisure. You are always engaged in some good work. What a history is that of the last six weeks. Even Bradlaugh must, I think, confess in an over-ruling Providence ! The occupation of Rome by the Italians, and the cessation of the temporal power will be a tremendous blow to the system, though the annihilation will be suspended. No human arms will accomplish that mighty issue. In the midst of all these tremendous events ‘the sound of many nations rushing to battle,’ may God give us all grace to pray much more for the second Advent.”

From the time that their friendship began, Catherine Marsh always sent Mr. Gladstone her annual card of prayer, and on January 3rd, 1871, he wrote to her after receiving it :

“My dear Miss Marsh,—Accept my best thanks, and believe me I am well assured that you cannot render me a more genuine service than in praying for me, and exhorting me to pray. And surely if there ever was a crisis, it is this.—Ever sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.”

When Catherine Marsh lived in Brighton she became acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Macnaghten and their large happy family of sons and daughters in their home at Ovingdean House. They heard with interest about the addresses in the Pavilion, some of them came to hear them, and Mrs. Macnaghten, Caroline, and Julia became her special friends. This summer the Macnaghtens were in London, and as she was also there, she was frequently with them, for Caroline was very ill, and she had asked her to be with her on her dying day. How that day was passed is told in the next letter.

C. M. to Mr. Gladstone :

“June 21st, 1870.—My dear Mr. Gladstone,—You kindly bade me let you know when I came to London, and invited me to your Thursday morning breakfasts, may I avail myself of it for next Thursday, my last in London for the present. I should have asked this sooner, but I was sent

for by two dying friends, and have made no engagement which might interfere with constant attendance upon them. They are now far above the need of any earthly comforter. The last who died¹ was at once like the heir of a magnificent inheritance 'coming of age,' and the happiest of brides on her marriage day. She seemed to see the city 'Whose Builder and Maker is God.'

"As I went into her room early in the morning of the last day she spent on earth, she said with a quiet rapture of tone and countenance, 'Before nightfall I shall be with the Lord Jesus, I shall see the King in His beauty.' When her mother repeated to her the Psalmist's words, 'Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil,' she replied, 'There are no shadows here, dearest mother, it is all sunshine.' And to me she said with her pleasant smile, 'I shall tell John Bunyan that he made a mistake. No river, no flood, no waters! My Saviour is lifting me over the narrow line which divides me from His Living glorious Presence.'

"I wish *you* had seen her. It was all so real, so simple, so natural—and she looked like a young Queen, crowned with her golden hair—and her eyes filled with a sort of victorious happiness. 'More than a conqueror through Him that loved her.'—Dear Mr. Gladstone, Yours very sincerely and gratefully, CATHERINE MARSH."

On May Day in the next year, the mother rejoined her child. Then Julia's call came on July 22nd, 1872, and Catherine Marsh wrote to the lessening group:

"My heart is full of sorrow and sympathy. Dear lovely child, she can scarcely be more of a saint and angel now, than she lived and died on earth. She seemed so nearly perfect, such a union of sense and spirit, sweetness and tenderness. How clearly now I can see her thoughtful earnest young face, at a meeting of Lord Radstock's at Brighton. On that day, seeing her tears, I left my seat, and coming close beside her, I whispered a short prayer; she came home with me, and we loved each other from that day to this, and we shall love through all eternity. Tell

¹ Caroline Macnaghten.

me the hour in which she passed to her Saviour's Presence, whether it was in the night. I had such a feeling of a lovely spirit going home that night, and the sound of strange sweet music in the air made me keep a watch-night of solemn praise. My heart bleeds for darling Lily."

Forty years later, Julia's companion sister Lily, wrote of this time, "How well I remember Julia coming home after a meeting at Brighton, when Miss Marsh had been speaking with her. It was then that she gave herself up entirely to God's service. She told me that she opened her Bible that night on the words, 'Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all,' and from that day it certainly did, and her life was most beautiful. She loved Miss Marsh with a deep devotion."

A description of Catherine Marsh at this time is recalled by Miss Angel Brooke:

"In the Autumn of 1871, I was staying at Norwood, when Miss Marsh (in response to my letter), asked me to come to Beckenham Rectory. *English Hearts and Hands* had influenced me to work more earnestly among the poor in my father's parish in Huntingdonshire. I remember how much she impressed me as she entered the room, and I saw her tall stately figure, her face beaming with lovingkindness and 'the light that never was on sea or land,' and heard her exquisite voice with its varied liquid tones. She seemed to spread an atmosphere of peace around her, and as we talked I felt I was in the presence of one of the Master's most intimate and closest of friends. She asked me of my work among the people of our village, and spoke of the blessedness of taking every anxiety and trouble direct to Jesus, and of the joy of realising His Presence; how when we felt cold at heart it was best to go at once to Him and tell Him, adding, 'My dear Father used to say you go into the sunshine to get warm, so go to Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness to get your heart warmed.'

"When I told her of how her *English Hearts* always stimulated me when I read it—she said, 'I have not

read it for twelve years, but I think I must read it again !’

“ I felt that day the wonderful power of her sympathy, it was such that when she spoke to you, it seemed as if you for the time being were the only person she was conscious of in the world. I had the happiness of seeing her again in 1872, 1875 and 1881. The last time we were alone, and I asked her did she always speak to people about religion, even when she did not feel inclined? ‘ Not always,’ she said, ‘ I wait to see if the Lord has a message for me to say to them—I pray.’ I shall always feel grateful for having known her. It was a pleasure to recall these memories from my journal.”

A few of Catherine Marsh’s characteristic letters follow next, the first is to Miss Maitland :

“ To-day there came to my room a wooden box. With much excitement it was opened, and out came a beautiful old-age text : ‘ At evening-time it shall be light.’ Oh, thank you, my Car, I do love my text, and I like the fern leaves round it. Yesterday dear old Miss Charlotte Elliott sent me, ‘ A hymn for the aged,’ and the day before Lord Roden sent me, ‘ A prayer for those advanced in years, and bending under the weight of infirmities.’ I like the coincidences so much, and take it as a token that ‘ the time is short ’ for me, and therein do I rejoice. But I am glad there is perpetual youth in store for us, for I like its boundings of heart and limb, and its boundless spirits, and resources of enjoyment. But better still, I love the knowledge that has come through sorrows, and trials, and pardoned sins—of a Love which has never wearied towards me—and is fresher than the freshest dew of youth, and mellower than the ripest tenderness of age. I want to live in the *gladness* of that Love, more fully ‘ satisfied with favour—*full* with the blessing of the Lord.’ Let us, my Car. Your own old Katie.

“ Did you know our Mr. John Campbell Colquhoun? He was so delightful, and now, after losing his wife only ten weeks ago, he has gone to spend his Easter holidays with her—and with all the Company of Heaven—in the

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mellower than the
ripest tenderness of age.

presence of His Saviour. And those holidays will never end—and will grow ever gayer and gayer with fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. But it is sad for his sons and his friends—and a dead loss to the cause of God's Truth in this Country. I wish we were both gone holidaying too."

One of the girls who had been in the Orphanage, wrote to tell Catherine Marsh that she had made an acquaintance who wanted her to go on the stage, and to her she replied :

"Dear child, I am sorely grieved to hear of this temptation. Of course, I can understand that its gaiety seems bright and charming to you, but it is a path of danger, which might end in misery and shame for you. If you come to the Lord Jesus, He will make you happy in His love—not with the happiness you think you will find in music and dancing, and gay dresses and tinsel and paint—but with letting you be His own dear little friend, and giving you His Holy Spirit, and what a Friend you will have in Him, for He is so glorious and lovely and tender and kind, and 'mighty to save'; let Him save you, now, and forever. He is saying to you, 'Come, little May, come unto Me, and I will give you rest.'—Ever your sincere and anxious friend, CATHERINE MARSH."

This appeal was not made in vain.

Part of a long letter to Miss Evelyn Abel-Smith, in answer to her questions :

"Please open your Bible at the Epistle to the Ephesians, and mark the words *have* and *has*, they abound in the first and second chapters. They will be a blessing to you all your life, as they have been to me since I first marked them. Yet St. Paul wrote to a church, some members of which had lived in great outward sins, and to all of whom he said, 'Ye were dead in trespasses and sins,' but 'you *hath* He quickened.' St. John v. 24 and 1 St. John v. 11 speak of Eternal Life as the *present*, not merely the future possession of them who believe in Jesus. If it *could* be lost after having once been given, it might have been spiritual life for a day, a year, or 50 years, but it would never have been called *Eternal*.

“What is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? It is to give your heart to Him, and with it the life must follow. Moreover He gives His Holy Spirit to those who ask, and then even little sins unnoticed by others become hateful, and make the child of God miserable until he has gone to the Lord Jesus for a fresh sprinkling of His Blood on the conscience, and for fresh grace and strength to conquer sin.”

C. M. to Lady Rayleigh:

“Dear Lord Rayleigh will have felt Lord Roden’s death, as we have, for he was such a dear old friend. But so bright and hymn-singing a Christian seems more fit for the Choir of Heaven, than to stay paralysed on earth; not but what he was singing his hymns, and praying, to all but his last day. There passed across the dark River at the same hour, that noble Scottish Christian hero, the white-haired Mr. Grant of Arndilly, after ten weeks of great suffering, in which he testified of Christ’s Presence with him to the end of the Valley of the Shadow; and *then*—as he passed to the sunny side of the narrow River, I believe there was not so much as a foot’s space of land for him to stand upon, by reason of the crowd of his spiritual children who had gone Home before him, and who rushed to the River’s bank to greet him. How he would press through them all to the Saviour Whom he loved and served so devotedly! ‘All the bells of the city’ must indeed have ‘rung again for joy,’ when those two men of God were borne by Angel convoys inside its gates, ‘the which (when I see in vision), ‘I *wish* myself amongst them.’”

About this time she went to stay at Broadlands for one of the Conferences there. She had a true friendship with Lord and Lady Mount Temple. The latter wrote to her:

“Who that ever loved you could cease to do so. Your love at first draws, and then rivets, the love of others.” While he thus described her: “Her soul is already in the unlimited untiring region of heavenly love.”

At Broadlands she renewed a friendship, begun some years before in a railway journey, with Mrs. Rundle Charles,

the author of many lovely poems and interesting books. After leaving Broadlands, Mrs. Charles wrote to her :

“ I have a delightful recollection of our quiet time together in your room at Broadlands. I thank God for the *health* of spirit given you, true woman and true Christian, to diffuse through the country you love so dearly, long may God spare you to gladden and help us.”

Here also her friendship began with the beautiful and rarely talented artist, Louisa Lady Waterford; of this she has written her own account.¹ Ever after they kept up a regular correspondence, and she was always a longed-for guest of Lady Waterford's at Highcliffe in the south, or Ford Castle in the north of England.

It was at Broadlands too that she also first met and became friends with Edward Clifford the well-known artist who, at the height of his popularity, laid aside his art, which he loved, that he might devote himself entirely to the work of the Church Army; and he steadfastly kept to his purpose, as long as his life lasted.

In a letter to her sister, Catherine Marsh records these helpful words : “ Lord Shaftesbury said to me at Broadlands, ‘ Let us see much of the Lord Jesus *in His Gospels*—be continually getting into His company by studying Him, there.’ ”

When the autumn came she went to Scotland, and wrote to her younger niece from Dunrobin Castle : “ It is Sunday night, and the Lord has helped me through the day, and through that which I most dreaded, having to conduct family worship when Lord Shaftesbury, Mr. Delane, and many more were present. I did shrink from it, but my God can bless the weak and helpless words, and His own are Almighty.”

To Mrs. Chalmers she tells of the beginning of another great friendship.

“ *Balmacaan*.—Here, as at Dunrobin, I felt my Lord has called me. For the first time in the memory of any, there was family prayer in this house last night (Sunday).

¹ *Story of Two Noble Lives*, by Augustus Hare, Vol. III. p. 319.

I read the last three verses of St. Matthew xi. and felt much feebler, and less helped than at Dunrobin, but rejoiced to remember that 'God had chosen the *weak* things of the world,' and could use them at their weakest. Afterwards Lady Seafield and one of her guests came to my room for further conversation and prayer. The guest is leaving this morning, and she kindly said to me, 'I am thankful indeed that I came here.' I have given her our precious Father's *Life*. Her husband told me that Buddhism was as true as Judaism! 'Do pray for them both, and for my kind host, and sweet, bright hostess, who last night said to me with trembling lips, 'I do *so* desire to know that I am saved, that Jesus Christ is my own.' And pray for their son, their only child, who is in the Life Guards. On Saturday he and I walked up the hill at the back of the house, and we sat there for a long time, overlooking the lovely scene, and conversing, and then praying; and last night he thanked me so earnestly. But I want all in the house for the Lord Jesus and I am asking Him to make the conversations, the words of family prayer, and the books—the seed of Life Eternal by the power of the Holy Spirit."

The Countess of Seafield to C. M.:

"*Balmacalan, October 5th, 1871.*—"God only knows of the good you may have done here. As for myself the house seemed so dull and dreary with 'the Prophet's chamber' empty—so Reidhaven and I had to console ourselves with his reading to me the book you had given us. All our guests think it is such a privilege to have made your acquaintance. Colonel C—— spoke so enthusiastically of you, it pleased me much. How can I tell you the deep feeling of gratitude I have all over my heart for the way in which you have taken us strangers into your friendship. God bless you for it. Reidhaven will write to you himself his grateful thanks." He wrote the next day, and the friendship between them grew and strengthened. After his father's death,¹ he lived for his widowed mother, and she saw with delight that he used the influence that

¹ John Charles, seventh Earl of Seafield, who died in 1881.

wealth and position gave him, in benevolent works, and in God's service until his almost sudden call came; then, though he was in the first prime of his life, he was ready to go, his only regret that he had to leave his mother in sorrow, but even for this he said, "Father, not my will, but Thine, Thine, Thine."

In December 1871 the all but fatal illness of the Prince of Wales, drew out the genuine sympathy of the people; Catherine Marsh has described this feeling. "A nation waited in breathless suspense for tidings of the royal sufferer, and the pulses of all England beat together as in a mighty heart. The strange coincidence of dates, and the similarity of his illness with that which bore away his father's life, impressed many minds with the dread that the mournful parallel would be completed."

The thought occurred to her that on the eve of the 14th, the dreaded day, the anniversary of the Prince Consort's death, a watch night of prayer should be kept, and be followed by a day of prayer. She made this known as widely as she could, and a service, for prayer for the Prince, was held in Sheriff Hales Church in the afternoon of the 14th. On her way to the church, a telegram met her: "The Prince has slept a little, and is passing the morning tranquilly." It was read to the congregation, and as they dispersed they spoke together of the hope that prayer had already prevailed; and so it proved.

Great was her rejoicing in the recovery of the Prince, for whom she felt a loyal and deep affection. To help to keep in mind the remembrance of God's signal mercy, she wrote with all speed her little book, *The Prince and the Prayer*. It was published in January, 1872, and could hardly be printed fast enough to meet the demand for it; soon 130,000 were sold, and another edition of 60,000 was called for.

On February 27th, when the Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Royal Family went in state to St. Paul's to return public thanks to Almighty God for his recovery, Catherine Marsh had a place assigned her in

the Cathedral, and afterwards she wrote the account of it, in a little book which she called *The Prince and the Praise*.

Catherine Marsh's deep attachment to the Church of England made her dread any step being taken that she feared would be to its injury, and after the decision in the case of Mr. Bennett of Frome, she wrote to Lord Shaftesbury :

"I feel anxious as to the result of the judgment of the Judicial Committee on the Bennett case, lest that result should be a secession of Evangelical Clergy. But do you not think that as the judgment is that Mr. Bennett's doctrine is *not* the doctrine of the Church of England, though adjudged to be 'dangerously near being directly opposed to it;'—for them to desert their Church would be little less than treason?—it would be to leave her members to the teaching which would bring back the idolatry of the mass."

A glimpse of her Shropshire home is given in the next letter.

The Earl of Chichester to C. M. :

"*September 8th, 1872.*—A few lines to say how much I enjoyed my visit to Sheriff Hales. It was indeed to me a green pasture beside still and refreshing waters, in that Vicarage, with the atmosphere of peace and love which seems to reign there. I am apt to feel too much—that faith is very weak, love cold, and progress in *driving out the Canaanites*, very slow, yet through God's mercy I think there *is* progress. My conflict reminds me of an exciting ten minutes of my life at school. We were rowing up against tide from Greenwich in our six-oar boat, and we met a considerable fall under old London bridge. Though pulling with all our might we seemed either stationary, or sometimes receding an inch or two between the strokes. We were of course in considerable danger. Our gallant little steersman (poor Arthur Paget) never lost head or courage, and kept cheering us on, till at last, inch by inch and then foot by foot, we got through, with a hearty

cheer from the crowd on the bridge. You will be able to apply my parable."

In the autumn of 1872 Mr. Chalmers was appointed to the living of Nonington in Kent. When he first entered on his charge of Beckenham, it was a village with a population of 1200; now it contained about as many thousands, and had three or four churches, with districts assigned to them.

The passing out from Beckenham Rectory could not be like an ordinary removal to another home, and letters written at the time show something of the feeling called forth by the change.

C. M. to M. C. :

"*September 1872.*—My heart enters into all you feel about Beckenham, its beloved associations, its manifold interests, its centre for family meetings, its charm of house and grounds; but all the same, I believe the right time to leave it has come, to save you both from being worn out; and before you go, I believe we shall have secured the new Church for the continuance of the same teaching which dear Frederick has taught, *and lived*. Do you recall how much I disliked, save for Henry's and Lucy's sake, going to live at Sheriff Hales?—and *now* it is a most dear *tabernacle* to me on the way to the Crystal City. If only the Lord Jesus is with us, any place to which He takes us will be bright with His Presence."

C. M. to a friend :

"*Beckenham Rectory, September 1872.*—These are such touching days here—we have to keep up a perpetual fight between smiles and tears, for the parishioners are full of love for 'the parents of the parish' as they call my sister and her husband, and of grief, because they are losing them. People of different views join in the grief and say, 'They have held us all together like a family in bands of love.' The ladies of the parish have given my sister a beautiful piano; the letter to be sent with it was written by Mrs. Craik,¹ and in it she said, 'the hardest

¹ Author of *John Halifax, Gentleman*, and many other books.

word ever said of you behind your back, was ' Mrs. Chalmers is too tender-hearted.' ”

From Mrs. Craik :

“ Dear Miss Marsh,—Thank you for your books and letter, the more warmly because we differ so widely. But as I often say to my dear little Aunts who think as you do—may we all one day ‘ wake with sweet surprise ’ to find ourselves much nearer than we knew.—Ever sincerely yours, D. M. CRAIK.

“ I hope to see you again when I come to Nonington in May. I quite recognise what was once told me of you—nobody could live a week in the same house with Miss Marsh without being fond of her.”

George Marshall¹ to M. C.

“ *Allahabad, October 10th.*—I have just heard of the breaking up of the old home at Beckenham, the scene of so many happy memories, and hallowed by so many years of love, and of joys and sorrows mutually shared and borne. I little thought when last I left the Rectory that before I returned to England again, it would have passed into other hands, and I can hardly realise it now. The breaking up of an old home, and especially of such a home as Beckenham, cannot but be a heavy blow.”

The iron house of the orphanage was taken to Nonington by Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers, and set up in the Vicarage Garden, to the delight of the orphans. It was sufficient for the small number of children now left in it.

November and December of this year were spent by Catherine Marsh in London. On November 6th she wrote to her sister :

“ Lord Shaftesbury called to-day to say good-bye. He is going to Mentone, hoping the warm climate may restore his delicate daughter. I never saw any face with such marks of sorrow as his has now. Yet he is wholly going out of self to further the interests of the Kingdom of Christ, and has just had a great meeting of Evangelists to pray, and to plan what can be done for the good of all

¹ Major-General Marshall, C.I.E.

London this winter. Just what our dear Father would have done when in sorrow. Those great souls fill my little one with profound admiration."

Lord Shaftesbury to C. M.:

"*Mentone, November 28th, 1872.*—Your letters and your little books are invaluable to us. They fill me and mine with the conviction that God is about to do great things for the world by the instrumentality of pious women, 'thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice.' They have, as it were, an instinct in religious things that no man can attain to.

"The Advent season is at hand, and nine-tenths of the clergy will preach about the first, and say little or nothing about the Second Advent. Yet it is the only hope of all the ends of the earth. The more I think and labour, the more I gain experience by intercourse with this wretched world in all its degrees, aspects and departments, the more I see that everything is reserved for His Coming. Man is allowed to touch but the fringes of the evils that beset us. 'None but Christ, none but Christ,' is as true for this world, as for the next. The signs are growing clearer, and yet the event may be far off according to our short and feeble lives."

Lady Constance Ashley died on December 16th, and Catherine Marsh wrote to Lord Shaftesbury:

"I pray continually that through each wave of those two¹ great sorrows which have overflowed your path, the Hand of our tender Saviour may lead you, and that He may let you feel as well as know how near He keeps you to His heart of unutterable love and sympathy. I believe that His *sole* purpose towards us (who know and love Him and want to love Him more every moment), when He bereaves us of the presence of our hearts' darlings, is just to make Himself absolutely necessary to us every minute—taking away our heaven upon earth—that He may give us that which makes the joy of Heaven, Himself—His Presence and His Love with an intensity and sweetness we could otherwise never have known. So I pray

¹ Lady Shaftesbury had died on October 15th, 1872.

that to you whose life has spoken His message of love and compassion to so many thousands of the sorrowful and oppressed, He may show depths and heights of His infinite tenderness and goodness—such as He showed to the beloved disciple. We know how devotedly we loved our precious ones, and that we made them so happy that they could not have borne to leave us if they had not caught sight of the Master's Face—one glimpse of that Face outweighed all that we had been to them, and *we are content that it should be so*. However those beloved ones are not going to have it all their own way for long! Our turn is coming soon, and *then*, how glad they will be."

Among her letters for the New Year, was the following from Mr. Gladstone :

"10 Downing Street, Whitehall, January 3rd, 1873.—Dear Miss Marsh,—I thank you very much for your New Year's gift. The book ¹ I hope to read on Sunday; with the card you have enclosed it is impossible not to sympathise, and if I am forgetful of its spirit, not to say its letter, I shall be guilty of a much higher offence than even indifference to your goodness.—Believe me, Sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE."

Early in this year, while staying with friends in London, Catherine Marsh went with them to see the part of Dr. Barnardo's work which is carried on at "The Edinburgh Castle." When they came into the boot and shoe making department, the master shoemaker looked up from his work, and after gazing for a few seconds at her face, he came towards her with a bright smile, and asked if she remembered speaking to him when he was one of the cholera patients in the London Hospital?

Afterwards he wrote this letter:—

"February 18th, 1873.—Since you spoke to me in the London Hospital about my soul I have not ceased to pray that God would give me the privilege of speaking to you once more. It was the first time I was ever spoken to about my soul, and your words left an impression that could never be blotted out. I resolved on leaving the

¹ Probably *From Dark to Dawn*, which she had just published.

Hospital to be a better man, but when I met my old companions I forgot the vows I had made, and went far into sin again. But wherever I went the words you told me, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,' followed me. Sometimes in the beershop with other bad men blaspheming God's Holy Name, those words would come into my mind, like something crying in me, and I have been compelled to leave their company. One night a young man who had visited me in the Hospital found me playing at cards. When I saw him I had to stop, and he spoke to me about Christ, and he said he would come again, which he did, and this time I was preparing to go to the East London Theatre. Oh, how annoyed I was when I saw him; but now I thank God he came. He read me part of St. Matthew v., and then I saw what a sinner I had been, not only against God, but against my children's souls, and I thought God would not have mercy on such a sinner. Then I realised the text you gave me, it led me to Calvary where Christ died in my stead. I had never been into any place of worship, and I could not read. But I found a friend in kind Dr. Barnardo, and can never tell what the goodness of God has been to me."

When the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh returned to England after their marriage, Catherine Marsh was staying in London. The next letter describes her way of enjoying a public festival:

"*March 12th, 1874.*—Such a day of delightful opportunities! In the morning quantities of books were welcomed by policemen and others. A strong-looking dark man asked for one, and said gently, 'Do you love Jesus?' 'Yes, I do, but I like best remembering that He loves me.' 'Ah, so do I. I've known Him twelve years; before that I was a prize-fighter. You may have heard of King, the prize-fighter, my name was in many newspapers then. Now for twelve years I have been pressing "after the prize of the high calling."' He asked if I had written the book, and then said, 'How I have wished to

meet you. May I shake your hand?' The police near were listening and smiling.

"Then Mary and I went to meet the dear Haldanes at a friend's house, where we could watch the procession. We had a good sight of the young royal bride's bright expressive face, and of our beloved Queen looking radiant. I dined at Colonel Trotter's house, and after dinner Minnie¹ came with me, and we took our stand under an illumination, and leant out of the windows of the cab, and gave away books, oh, to such eager people, till our supply was gone. Then we drove back and asked Mrs. Trotter to give us all the tracts and books she had, and returned to our work. When this stock was gone, we went to Mrs. George Hanbury, and she ransacked her house, and gave all she could find. Yet the crowds still kept passing and hands were stretched out, and voices said, 'O give me one!' So we went to Hunt's book-shop in Duke street. The bookseller was at the door. We begged him to unlock his shop and between us we bought up everything we knew to be good, or had confidence in by its author's name, and they gave them to us at cost price! This supply kept us busy till nearly 10 o'clock in giving them away. I think our cabman with whom I had two earnest talks, began to seek the Lord. So it was a lovely field-day: blessed be God for it."

A journey was a real pleasure to her, and never an idle time. Her large hand-bag well stocked with books, and plenty of writing materials, was soon opened and a letter begun, unless she was already conversing with some fellow-traveller, and letters like those that follow encouraged her.

"I shall never forget the happy journey I had with you, when you spoke so many helpful words to me."

From a stranger :

"Since the memorable day of our meeting in Euston Square Station, and then travelling in the same carriage, I have become more thoughtful about my soul's salvation. Dear Madam, if you had known what my heart was then,

¹ Miss Trotter, afterwards Mrs. Frank Bevan.

I do not think you would have spoken to me as you did, in such a kind manner. If you only knew what an effect your conversation and questions had upon me ever since, I am sure you would thank God. He has answered the prayer you taught me, 'Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove, and dwell in my sinful heart, and make it truly Thine,' though I have only just turned into the right way."

Once she was going from Brighton to London when the Easter holidays were beginning, and the train being very full, six small boys were hastily thrust into the carriage where she was alone, by a master who as hastily left them. She saw deep displeasure on their young faces, and ventured to ask the cause. It was, they said, "the beastly shame" that the master when he had taken their tickets had left them nothing with which to buy provisions by the way, for the *hour and a quarter's* journey! Moreover, as if in mockery of their trouble, a man selling butter-scotch had held it up at the carriage window. She asked, would it be possible to recall him before the train started—and some ready volunteers made the effort, which happily was successful. To the delight of her fellow-travellers she bought up the whole supply, and gave it to them to divide amongst themselves. While they were enjoying the butter-scotch they were very willing to listen to all she told them, and were prepared to welcome the book she promised to send to each of them.

The mother of one of the boys wrote to her:

"I must thank you much for your kindness to our boy. Georgie was full of his kind fellow-traveller, when he arrived, and is truly interested in the book. God grant he may follow the bright example you have put before him."

Some years later another of the boys wrote to her from his College at Oxford, and reminded her that—

"The butter-scotch episode took place on April 18th, 1878, and a book, *Crossing the River*, followed on the 20th."

Stories of her kindly deeds would fill a book; here is one: When she was staying for a night in a hotel in London a waiter to whom she was speaking confided to

her a reason that made him very unhappy in his situation, and yet he feared to risk being out of employment. She promised her help, which was successfully given, and he wrote: "I scarcely know how to express my thanks. I can scarcely believe I have been so richly provided for, and all through your kindness."

And another: When she was staying in London at Christmas time, as she was going home in the dusk she noticed a thinly clad shivering crossing-sweeper looking very forlorn, for it had begun to snow, and people were hurrying home carrying parcels, which allowed of no free hand to give him the hoped-for penny. A poulterer's shop was close by, with a fine goose hanging in the doorway. She inquired the price, and beckoning the crossing-sweeper to come, asked him if he could go on an errand for her. He said he would be glad of the chance. She asked, "Do you think you could carry that goose?" "Yes," he was sure he could, but where to? "What is your address?" she asked, and when he told her, said, "That is where it is to go to," and the payment for the errand was enough to make the Christmas dinner complete.

Kindly deeds being the habit of both, formed one of the many links of her sympathy with Lord Shaftesbury; also they both had found how true a friendship may be made with working men and women. He wrote to her on February 20th, 1875:

"I am writing to you with the costermongers' pen, which makes me humble, for it reminds me how many there are in that class of life far better than myself. And indeed I feel it; for your letter has given me a deeper conviction than before of the wisdom of 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us.'

"I can only say that if my example started you all in your career, God has put upon me an honour such as has rarely been vouchsafed to any man. It must do me good to be 'encompassed by prayer'—never was there greater need for guidance amidst the variety of counsels, and the still wider variety of action and sentiment."

On September 15th, 1875, she heard that there was a

terrible mining accident at St. George's, a few miles from Sheriff Hales, and she went at once to the scene of it. On her return she wrote to her sister—

“Just in from St. George's, from seeing the relations and friends of those poor fellows who were killed in the pit; such sorrowful meetings with the mothers, wives, and sisters of the victims of the accident. Oh, I do believe some of them received the message. I had asked for their souls, as a birthday gift from the Lord. It has been a good birthday, full of joyful trust in Jesus my Saviour.”

Her insight into the needs of a sorrow-stricken heart, is shown in the following letters to Dr. Arthur Stanley, the Dean of Westminster.

“From my heart I thank you for giving me a glimpse into that sacred dying room. Angels, and the Lord of Angels too, are waiting there, I doubt not, to carry your beloved one Home to Heaven. He Who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, shares unseen your tender watch by her side—gently soothing away all shrinking from death, and the unseen Beyond—by whispering, ‘Because I live, you shall live also,’ and ‘Where I am you shall be also.’ And He Who cares for all her pain and weakness—cares yet more for the deeper suffering of your desolate heart. May I, as one who has known sorrow, ask you not to yield to the usual well-meant advice about ‘seeking to profit by it.’ It was not the way of the Lord Jesus with the sorrowful when He was on earth, and He is not likely to be less tender in Heaven. In your darkest hour if you will just feel after Him, you will find Him close to you, a living, loving Man, yet Divine to uphold you. If you just say to Him, ‘Comfort me, Lord Jesus,’ I know how tenderly and strongly He will do it. Yet a little while and she will be yours again—sweeter, brighter and fuller of love to you, than even in your happiest days.”

C. M. to the Dean of Westminster :

“*January 29th, 1876.*—Those who have gone through any bereavement which cuts them off from all the sunshine

and glory of this past life, understand the different pangs of the different stages of grief, and only a constant interchange with the tender sympathy of the Lord Jesus Christ can quiet the vain yearnings for the beloved face, the sweet voice, and the precious companionship passed away—but only for a little while, for they (the yearnings) shall spring up afresh, in vain no more, at the moment which our Lord and Saviour is longing for, more than you, or I, or dear Charles Kingsley's widow, or any of us who have seen our best beloved ones go Home before us—when He shall restore to us our lost joys, shining in His beauty, and in their own too, to be our own for ever. Dear Dean of Westminster, till then, may He be more to you, (as a great soul can contain more of Him, and of His love and goodness)—than He has been or is to me.—Yours with deep sympathy, CATHERINE MARSH."

In 1876 when the Public Worship Bill was passing through Parliament, she was staying in London with the Anstruthers, and she wrote to Henry O'Rorke:

"You will pray, I know, and get prayer for the passing of this Bill into law. When Bob came back from the House he said there was no chance of the M.Ps. out-waiting or out-sitting all Gladstone's six resolutions. But our God has so marvellously timed this Bill, when the late Premier has lost favour with his own party, that I believe He will bring it to pass. The confidence that Englishmen have in Lord Shaftesbury, has stirred them up to protect the Bill that now goes by his name. That article in *The Times* about his life-work for the factory people, will surely help it on, it has drawn out the latent Protestantism of so many hearts. But we must scarcely breathe without a prayer until the six resolutions are withdrawn, and the Bill is Law. This is England's third awakening, within twenty years, to the fact of the tide of Romanism still rising over the land; if she goes to sleep again it may be the sleep of death.

"Later: The second reading of the Bill *passed* without a division, and such a Protestant speech by Disraeli."

In the autumn of 1876 Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers went to Walmer. He had had a severe accident, and was advised to go there to recover strength, and Catherine Marsh, who had been with them at Nonington, went also.

The Barracks were a great attraction, and on the beach they had made friends with many young soldiers, and with some of the sergeants. Soon a large room in the Barracks was offered for a Bible-reading and gladly accepted by Catherine Marsh. The soldiers crowded the room, and at her farewell meeting she promised to send a book to each. The sergeants promised to distribute them, and wrote to her :

“The books, 600, arrived safe, they were received by the lads with much interest, and many hopes that you would come again. We long for you. The lads don't care for high-flown language, but they understand heart language perfectly, such as you were able by God's guidance to give them. Five of us spoke a few words to them. We wish you could see the fruit of your labours, when we asked any who intended to take Jesus as their Saviour and Guide, to hold up their hands, and 40 lads did so,” and they added that the books she had given them would be “mementoes of the happiest evenings we have ever spent.”

Her editorial venture began and ended its short course in 1876. In February she wrote the next letter :

“My dear Mr. Gladstone,—Will you allow me to send you my first little venture at periodical editorship! *The Harbinger* goes to you by this post. I shall be so happy, and I fear a little proud, if you can like its first number. My great desires for it are expressed on the first page—not too great for Him ‘to Whom all desires are known’ to grant. Will you be so very kind as to say ‘Amen’ in your heart as you read them?—Ever, dear, Mr. Gladstone, Yours most sincerely and gratefully, CATHERINE MARSH.

“So many parents had spoken to me about a religious paper without controversy, and such as they could put



CATHERINE MARSH.

into their children's and young daughters' hands without fear, that at last my niece and I determined to risk it, not without much fear and trembling—and I may say not without asking our Master in Heaven, and waiting some time to see whether He led us to undertake it, and it seemed to us that He did."

At first everything looked hopeful for the success of the magazine. Friends helped, some wrote articles for it, some wrote true stories and some poems. But the strain of the editorship weighed her down. She wrote to her sister, who had recovered from a serious illness:

"How can we praise our Lord enough, that He has raised you up, and kept you for us. And He is able to keep up our spirits! I am often obliged to tell Him this, and ask Him to do so. The tremendous sense of bondage in my life of this Periodical—a treadmill—and the dread responsibility of getting able helpers, depresses me—yet the magazine seemed to be so needed, that I dry my tears and drudge on!"

The circulation was never large enough to enable the magazine to pay its way; the publishers told her it "could not be carried on because it was a losing concern," so it came to an end with the December number.

To her sister she wrote:

"Our *Harbinger* is dead! I daresay we should soon have been dead of doing it—but we *are* sorry."

Mr. Vaughan¹ who had been one of her helpers, reminded her that the office of a harbinger was not a permanent one, when he had given his message his duty was done; and she was very thankful for this thought.

Many and hearty were the regrets of the subscribers for its short-lived career, but none were more pleasant than Miss Nightingale's:

"*February 7th, 1877.*—Dear Miss Marsh,—How can I thank you for much kindness? Except indeed by telling you your kindness is not lost. Your little book of *The Hero*, etc. is very dear to me, and I have already given

¹ The Rev. James Vaughan, of Christ Church, Brighton, a remarkable preacher, whose short sermons have been called "Celestial Telegrams."

away many copies. Everything that you write has in it so sweet a savour of holiness that I believe it seldom fails to touch and do good. Your *Harbinger* was very precious to me while it lasted, and introduced me to many things to introduce to others. I learnt with very great regret that the *Harbinger* was discontinued, but I hope it is only for a time. I have found it very useful. My immense family of Hospital sons and daughters, patients and nurses, increasing of course every year, makes me like a cormorant in snatching at all these good things. One of my ever-recurring anxieties, however, is : while preaching to our nurses that they are 'Missionaries' to show them the only way in which their 'mission' can be acceptable either to God or to the patients. They must be true nurses, and be true missionaries.

"I have one of our matrons, 'Sisters' (called so merely from old Hospital usage), Nurses, or Probationers, to tea with me every afternoon that I possibly can. I am always strongly impressed with the feeling that there are but few of them who might not more properly be *my* head than I theirs (perhaps may be in another world), and that it is only the 'accident' or the incident of God's providence that has made me, as it were, incidentally, *their* head in this world. We pray, too, daily together that, while we are ourselves (in a way) preaching to others, we may each of us not prove to be a 'castaway.' You kindly ask after me ; it is business ever increasing ; illness ever increasing. How little one can do even of what one is 'called' to do ! May your valuable life and strength be prolonged to write and to speak these cheering, inspiring, heart-searching appeals for God, which urge to the work all who read, is the fervent prayer of yours ever in Him, FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE."

In the spring of 1877 she was staying at Beddington for a few days, and from thence she wrote this little letter, which tells how much her realising hope for, and expectation of the coming of the Lord, comforted her heart. It is to L. E. O'R., and is dated *Brandries, February 10th* :

"To-day I stood by the sacred grave. It is kept in

lovely order by beloved Mrs. Laurence, and my dear little Harriett Knyvett. I thought how soon the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, and my beloved Father will rise glorious, immortal, to be caught up together with us, to meet the Lord in the air."

Catherine Marsh never forgot her navvy friends, and when she heard that one of them was working on the railway near Lynn, she at once wrote to him, and he replied :

"I cannot express my feelings of joy at receiving a letter from so dear a friend. I have many times spoken of you, and entreated Christians not to slight the poor downcast sinner, having known what it was to be slighted when going about as a navvy. I shall never forget the first 'shake of the hand' I got from you, being the first I ever had from a Christian friend."

When she had lost sight of a navvy in whom she had been greatly interested, after all her endeavours to trace him had failed, she put this short paragraph in her little book—"A Tale of old Beckenham: Should this meet the eye of Robert Taylor, it will let him know that prayer is still made for him that he may be 'faithful unto death,' and 'receive a crown of life.'" She tells the sequel to her search—

C. M. to L. E. O'R. :

[No date.] "At Victoria Station on Friday, a man with grizzled hair and beard said to the porter who was attending on me, 'Leave *me* to do for *this* lady,' and he walked by my side carrying my bag. Dear Madeleine Kintore was on the other side. At last he said, 'You don't know me, I see, ma'am,' and the tears stood in his eyes. It was Robert Taylor! who first brought Johnny Hooker to my Bible-reading, then in the room at the back of 'The Three Tuns.' He had not seen 'The Tale of old Beckenham,' with the message to himself, nor did he know that John Hooker was dead—or rather, alive for evermore with the Lord of Life. I have sent the little book to Robert, and have had an affecting note from him

since he read it. I believe the Lord let us meet again to revive His own work in Robert's heart."

War clouds were again coming up, and threatening Europe in 1877. After the failure of the Conference of the Great Powers at Constantinople, Russia declared war against Turkey on April 24th, 1877. After the fall of Plevna on December 10th, Lord Beaconsfield ordered the British Fleet to pass through the Dardanelles (though this was not done), and later the Government called out the Reserves, brought troops from India to the Mediterranean, and England was on the very verge of war, but this time it was mercifully averted.

While the decision was hanging in the balance, the men in the Mediterranean Fleet were much in Catherine Marsh's thoughts, and her offer to send a supply of her books to each of the ships was heartily welcomed by the Rev. John Cawston, D.D., Chaplain of the Fleet. He wrote to her :

"Your kindness will be much appreciated. I send a formidable list, 33 ships, from one station. To carry out your wishes pertains to my office, but it is also a labour of love in behalf of classes of men with whom I have been closely connected for more than twenty-five years."

The Rev. Walter Tucker, Chaplain of Admiral Hornby's Flagship, wrote to Dr. Cawston :

"A box with a large number of religious books came to this ship. These I distributed on Sunday, so many to each Mess, the men seemed very pleased. I see a number of them are written by Miss Marsh. If it is to this charitable and benevolent lady we are indebted, she may rest assured that her kindness is appreciated, and in all probability the religious life of some of our young sailors has been awakened or increased through her instrumentality."

And there are other letters to show that her effort was not in vain.

In the summer of 1878 the Eastern Question was again occupying all thoughtful minds, and the result of the Berlin Congress was awaited with intense anxiety. But the return of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury bringing

the good news of "Peace with Honour" turned the tide of suspense into thankful rejoicing.

Catherine Marsh wrote to her sister on July 17th :

"It was a grand reception Lord Beaconsfield, that son of the royal nation, met with, and no less than he deserved. Only I wish he had said, 'Lord Salisbury and I have brought you Peace with Honour—*thank God.*' However, under God, it is to *him* we owe it, not to Bismarck. The consummate genius of the Jew is the thing God has used to avert war; and the stroke of strokes was bringing the Sepoys over to Malta.

"The Bollands are here for the day from Wolverhampton. He told us that lately he was in London, and went on the top of many omnibuses, to chat with the drivers, and he found them all, to a man, devoted to Lord Beaconsfield. One of Mya's old women said to her at the clothing club, 'I hope this bother' (the fear of war) 'will soon be over I'm sure. They say Lord *Baconsfield* is the best of the lot to get us out of it. I don't know the gentleman myself—but if he'll just get us out of the bother, I, for one, shall feel very much obliged to him.' I feel just as that old woman said *she* should. I always knew, and told you so in the spring, that he meant to do it, and by God's favour to one of His ancient people, he would do it. Glory be to God for prospering him."

Catherine Marsh had met Lord Beaconsfield in London, and had had an interesting conversation with him during an evening party at Londonderry House, so she ventured to write the following letter to him on August 16th, 1878 :

"May I ask you to accept the *Life* of my Father, as a small token of deep gratitude to you for having saved our country alike from a dishonourable and dangerous peace, and from a dreadful and devastating war. May the God of peace Himself fill your heart with the peace of trusting in His Son as your Saviour and Friend for this life, and for the life to come.

"With heartfelt thankfulness for such a pilot for our country through such troubled waters, and for so trusted a sheet anchor for the anxious heart—in such a crisis—of

our beloved Queen, Believe me, Dear Lord Beaconsfield,
Yours most gratefully, CATHERINE MARSH."

Early in 1878 she had written to the Archbishop, Dr. Tait, and he replied on January 26th: "I have too long delayed to thank you for the 'Fatherly Words.' In these anxious days the circulation of your honoured father's advice will be most welcome. We do not fail to pray for the blessings you rightly say are so much needed.—Ever yours, A. C. CANTUAR."

Later she must have heard from him about the illness of his only son, for on April 7th, she wrote:

"When I read in your letter that your beloved son was no worse, I thanked God and took courage to continue in prayer for him.

"What anxious forebodings were in several papers on Saturday. Newspapers of different religious views have kindly admitted my letters (signed 'Peace') urging that your prayer of four months ago should be used in every church. Since then I have seen that you have also recommended that the Collect for the 5th Sunday after Trinity should be used. Oh, if the Lord would by His Holy Spirit stir up prayer in the hearts of all the people of our country, in a spirit of humbling ourselves for national and personal sins, and of supplication as in the days of the Prince of Wales's illness—not only the horrors of war might be averted—they *would* be I firmly believe—but what spiritual blessings might be given also."

After hearing of the death of his son, she wrote to the Archbishop on June 2nd:

"For him for whom you must so deeply mourn, it is all joy! His young beautiful career has not been cut short—it has only been given freer scope in a grander field. 'His servants shall serve Him,' in His Presence where there is *fulness* of joy. Yet a little while, and He will be coming with all His saints—your darling son, and the sweet little ones who were carried Home in their Saviour's Arms so long ago—in that glorious company, and you will be with them again, and forever with the Lord. 'To know Him'

—more than we ever could without deep heart-trouble, is the real blessing that grows up out of affliction. How fervently I plead with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, that He will give to you and your dearest wife more than ever of His perfect sympathy, and that you may have an even deeper fellowship with Christ in His sufferings than could have been granted to you in any other way than ‘by this saddest heart-rending sorrow.’”

Towards the close of 1878 she had the following letter from Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.¹ He had sent her his book, *The Greatest of Miracles*, she was delighted with it, and in reply to her thanks for it, he wrote: “Lord Stratford begs to assure Miss Marsh that he sets a high value on her opinion of his little book. In writing the few pages published under the title of *The Greatest of Miracles*, he entertained no pretensions of a literary kind. The notion came into his head, he thought it was a truth, and as such he wished to put it into a shape adapted to general communication. He claims no merit beyond that which is no merit but a simple duty, the wish to throw in a mite for the furtherance of his Master’s cause. If it were more, the merit would be due, under Providence, to his mother, who had religion enough in her mind and practice to spare a portion of it even to the youngest of her children. As we owe our great disaster to the mother of us all, Miss Marsh may well agree with him in thinking that every mother is specially bound to bring up her children in our great Redeemer’s faith, she must also allow him to add, that those who, happening to be free from that particular obligation, devote their lives to the same good cause under much difficulty, with singular success, deserve to stand high in public estimation, and what is far more in the acceptance of our Almighty Sovereign and His Blessed Son.—*Frant Court. Nov. 16th, 1878.*”

¹ “Thou third great Canning, stand among our best
And noblest, now thy long day’s work hath ceased,—
Here, silent in our Minster of the West,
Who wert the voice of England in the East.”
(Epitaph, by Lord Tennyson, in Westminster Abbey.)

In December Henry O'Rorke's health had broken down completely, and he was ordered to go at once to a warm climate as the best hope of his ever becoming able to return to his work again.

The clergyman, with excellent testimonials, who came to take charge of the parish, suddenly developed homicidal mania, and threatened the life of Catherine Marsh and her niece.

Mr. Charles Cotes¹ had gone to the Vicarage to consult on the steps to be taken to secure him, and was talking with them in the boudoir, when the unhappy maniac, with his six-chambered revolver, had pushed past the maid at the hall door, and was coming up the corridor, and demanding in a loud voice to "see Mrs. O'Rorke alone"; but, as they both went out to meet him, he suddenly caught sight of Mr. Cotes's tall broad figure following them, and he turned and rushed out of the house. He hid behind some evergreen shrubs until he had watched Mr. Cotes well away, then he rushed back, and began banging on the locked door. There was an alarm bell on the roof, which was heard by Mr. Cotes, who was still in the village and hastened back, and by three working-men, who came with all speed; but before they could reach the Vicarage, they were seen by the poor man, who set off running across the snow-covered field, towards the gate that leads into the road to Shifnal, the opposite direction from the farm where he lodged.

When this happened, Henry O'Rorke, who had not yet heard of the dreadful occurrence, said to Robert and Louisa Anstruther, who were also spending the winter at Mentone, that he feared there was something wrong at home, for he had had one of his strange dreams in which he had seen Samuel Shotton the blacksmith, Albert Hales the carpenter, and Enoch Walker, one of the Lilleshall foresters, running up to the Vicarage in the middle of the day. That night these men kept watch round the Vicarage, unknown to the inmates, fearing that the madman might return.

¹ The Squire of Woodcote, M.P. for Shrewsbury and Government Whip under Mr. Gladstone.

C. M. to M. T. and M. C. :

“*January 7th, 1879.*—My precious Sisters,—By God’s unutterable goodness this dreadful time is over, and has ended in untold mercy. Not a life lost in securing this poor madman, though everyone who had to do with him felt he was close to death for the moment. The revolver, which was secured with difficulty, was found loaded with six cartridges. Oh, the gratitude of heart and life we long to show to our God who has delivered us from so great a danger.”

Mr. Cotes to C. M. :

“*January 18th, 1879.*—I am very glad to think that our trouble with Mr. — is now happily over. I have been to see the Doctor at the Asylum and he told me he thought we were extremely fortunate in having secured Mr. — without his having done any harm.

“I think of mentioning our deliverance in the thanksgiving prayer next Sunday, if you both, and the clergyman who has kindly come to our help, approve.”

As soon as arrangements could be made for a married clergyman to take charge of the parish and live in the Vicarage, Catherine Marsh and her niece went to join Henry O’Rorke and the Anstruthers at San Remo. Catherine Marsh had been suffering from bronchitis, and she could not get free from it in the bitter cold of that winter. They all stayed at the Hôtel Palmeira, and when Catherine Marsh arrived she was saluted on the staircase by a military officer, who said, “I heard you speak on board a ship in Rye harbour many years ago. It was the happiest hour in my life. I know my God now, and find His Fatherly Hand in everything.”

Soon she had a little circle of new friends, but the chief interest of that time was centred in a young man who was alone in the Hotel, and was slowly dying. The short story of his wasted life, with its merciful ending, was later on written by her under the title of *What might have been.*

The Zulu War was then going on, and the next letter tells that her thoughts were with our soldiers. It is to

Mrs. Dudley Ryder, and is written from Pallanza on April 21st :

"We are thinking of and praying for your dear son in the fighting in Zululand, that God in His tender mercy may keep him from all hurt or harm, in this terrible time of anxious suspense for you. We have no tidings yet how the little Army effected its junction with the 500 from Eshowe, led, I suppose, by dear Harry Macgregor, who sent me word they were having prayer-meetings in the fortress, four times a week ; surely all that prayer must end in praise. Your tenderly sympathising C. M."

It was after her return from Italy in April 1879, that her great friendship with Lady Ailsa¹ began. She wrote to ask about admission into Blackrock Convalescent Hospital for a poor man she was visiting in a London infirmary. In this letter she said : "Though I have never had the happiness of meeting you, so many of my relatives know you that I cannot write to you as a stranger," and the letter ends, "I find your books are everything to the sick and suffering. I never found anything loving and tender enough for them, till I read your books to them."

In July, 1879, Henry O'Rorke was able to return to England, with his health in a great measure restored, and he was then appointed by the Lord Chancellor (Lord Cairns) to the living of Feltwell, in Norfolk. For a short time they were at Sheriff Hales again, to bid good-bye to the loving parishioners and their kind friends in the neighbourhood, to whom Catherine Marsh had become dear by her many deeds of kindness, and ever ready sympathy. But they had the great comfort of knowing that the Rev. Charles Bradburne, who had been Henry O'Rorke's curate, with whom he was in complete sympathy, and who was already beloved in the parish, was to be his successor.

A farewell tea-party was to be given to the parishioners. The cakes, etc., were being made for it by a baker in the

¹ Evelyn, Marchioness of Ailsa. After her death, on July 26th, 1888, Catherine Marsh wrote a short sketch of her lovely character and saintly life.

adjoining parish of St. George's, when he was seized with a sudden illness, threatening to be rapidly fatal, and he was in great fear of death. His poor wife wrote in her distress to Catherine Marsh, who went at once to their house with the message of Divine Love, and free forgiveness through Christ alone. The next morning this short note, written in a trembling hand, reached her :

“Dear ministering angel,—Your prayers are answered. It is peace through the Blood of Jesus my Saviour. Cannot write more, come and see me.”

Through the perfect calm that from that day filled his mind, he made a most unexpected and complete recovery.

This was her last ministration in Sheriff Hales.

FELTWELL

PART I

COUNTRY LIFE—CAMBRIDGE FRIENDS—PUBLIC EVENTS—
CORRESPONDENCE—ETC.

1879—1900

“How little in our life below,
Externals make for weal or woe !
Whate’er around us lies, the whole
Still takes its colour from the soul.

Not purple hill, nor sapphire deep
Can make the spirit glad, or keep,
A twisted will, a thought defiled,
Soon turns an Eden to a wild.

When late I stepped, a passing guest,
Within your home of workful rest,
Mid-winter drenched with torrent rain
The spaces of the endless plain;

The giant clouds rode fast on high,
And earth frowned upward to the sky;
But home, and love, and grace Divine,
Made all things like an Eden shine.”

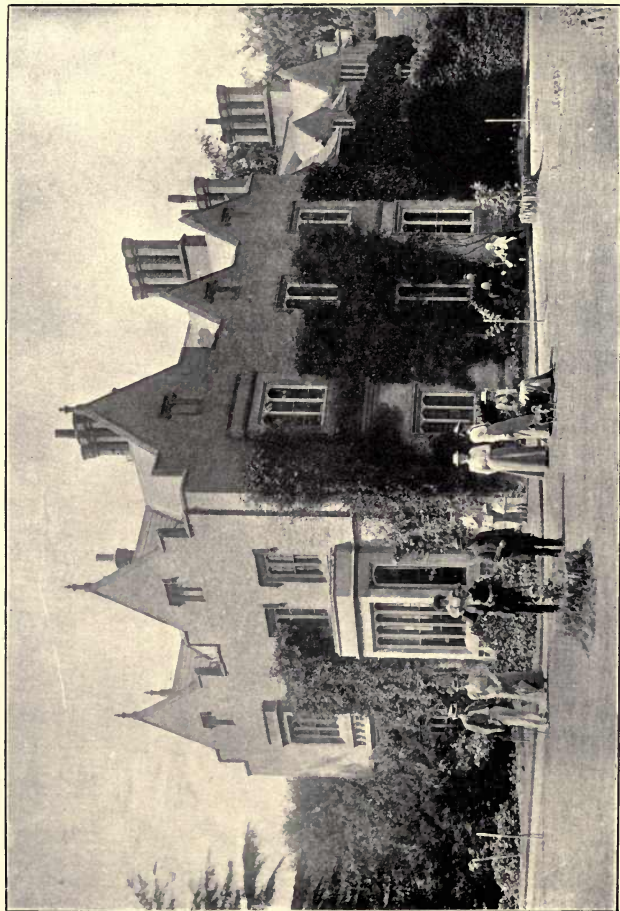
HANDLEY C. G. MOULE (now Bishop of Durham).

Feltwell Rectory, January 13th, 1885.

It was in November, 1879, that Catherine Marsh came to the last of her earthly homes.

The large Rectory gave ample room for the family of which she was always considered the head; Henry O’Rorke and his wife filled the place of son and daughter, and their children, and in later years their grandchildren, added greatly to her happiness; all were devoted to her, and she was devoted to them.

Feltwell is a large village, with a fine old church and an agricultural population. There, as in her former homes, she gave addresses to the parishioners in the school-



FELTWELL RECTORY, NORFOLK.

room, or the mission hall, and had meetings for the working-men, with tea-parties from time to time, according to her custom.

The ardour of her love for souls still burned with the same steady flame, and the spirit in which she entered this last home is clearly seen in the next letter.

After her first Sunday at Feltwell she wrote to her sister, Mary Trench :

“ Henry *read himself in* at the morning service, his voice was heard in every part of the Church. O, that we may have such a close walk with God here, by being filled with His Holy Spirit, that numbers may be won to the Lord Jesus. The Church is very beautiful, it reminds us a little of lovely Beddington. The house and grounds are charming, and while the trees are in their glorious Autumn robes of many colours, it is quite a thing I have to pray about, ‘ Lord make us remember that we only hold it moment by moment from Thee, *and for Thee.*’ ”

Her love of flowers, and delight in beautiful colours, often comes out in her letters; her boudoir in the summer was like a bower. Writing to Louisa Anstruther in the month of May, she describes what she could see from her window :

“ Beyond the garden, the field is a ‘ cloth of gold ’ of buttercups almost hiding the grass; and such towers of lilacs in full bloom, such golden pendants of laburnum—thousands of honeysuckle flowers are filling the house with their perfume, the pink chestnut flowers, and yet more the Maréchal Niel roses are charming the eye—it is an unrivalled Spring.” Later in the day she added: “ We missed you in our drive across the heath, amidst a sea of yellow gorse, encircled here and there with the purple pine woods, and through the glades we caught sight of the golden waves again.”

But the outward surroundings could not replace to her the wide spiritual interests that had filled the greater part of her life, so she sought and found them elsewhere. Cambridge was only an hour’s distance by train—she had undergraduate friends who could come to spend Sunday

at Feltwell, and she could help them, as in the past she had helped the Addiscombe cadets. Also she had friends living in Cambridge: Dr. Moule (the head of Ridley Hall, afterwards Bishop of Durham) and his wife, whom she had known and loved from her childhood, and Professor and Mrs. Babington; and when she stayed in either of these homes she complied with the requests of her undergraduate friends that she would have Bible-readings in their rooms. During one of these visits she wrote, "God is so good to give me this work in Cambridge, especially now that Feltwell is so well cared for."

But chiefly she valued the opportunities given to her there, of seeking some special soul for Christ. Sometimes she was told about one, of whom his companions thought that he was "not far from the Kingdom of God," and for whose sake she was asked to come, and help him to cross the border. Or, she was asked to pray that another who was placed in circumstances of special temptation might be kept from falling; and then, again, her prayers were asked that another might cease to use his popularity and influence for hindering God's work.

Of such an one she was told when she was staying in Cambridge, and was asked by the student who told her, whether she would come to his rooms, and meet this young man "*if he could be got to meet her!*" She consented to the conditional arrangement, and just as they were hoping he would venture to come, a noise of voices was heard outside; a little crowd had awaited him to try to persuade him not to go in. Her host opened the window and called to him to come up. He broke away from his comrades, ran up the staircase, and flinging open the door, announced he had just come only to say he had not five minutes to spare! Two hours later he was still sitting by her side, listening and inquiring, and was unwilling to go even then. The result cannot be known, for in her letter, which told of this, she did not mention his name, nor that of his College.

When D. L. Moody had a Mission at Cambridge, she went there also, and she wrote to her sister:

“After the first meetings for undergraduates, 120 stayed for the after meeting, and since then the numbers have increased, and there is evidence of a mighty work of the Holy Spirit here. At the meeting for townspeople, about 3000 were present, and numbers came to the enquiry room, where I went also, by Moody’s wish, to help the enquirers. At 8.30 I left to go to the Lord’s Supper in Mr. Barton’s Church, Holy Trinity—my godfather Charles Simeon’s Church. At the morning service I sat under his monument, and it was the centenary of his first sermon there.”

The good work helped forward by Moody’s mission went on steadily, and an earnest request was sent asking her to have a meeting with the undergraduates before the term ended, as it would be the last for several of the men. So on November 30th she went to stay with Professor and Mrs. Babington, and met them there. After she left, Mrs. Babington sent her a list of eighty-seven names of those whom she had met, and to whom she wished to send a book. Some of the names in that list belong to those who are now well-known leaders in Christ’s service.

At another time she wrote to her sister from Ridley Hall :

“I had a pressing invitation to give an address in the lecture room at Girton College, so these dear friends asked me to be their guest. I was invited by some of the students to have tea with them first, a sort of picnic, for each brought her cup and saucer in one hand, and in the other a plate of contributions : a cake, a muffin, or biscuits, and so on ! There is no President elected yet, since the marriage of the last, so I was borne in as it were on the shoulders of the republic ! I had rather dreaded the criticising tendency of the learned young women, but I never had more warm and loving thanks after a meeting than theirs were.

“Then, the next day was wholly given up to the young men. They came like a flowing stream—some to breakfast, some to luncheon, many to tea, and some to dinner, and many more in between meals—some coming for advice, some for helping on, some for kindness’ sake, some

because I knew their mothers, and many to cheer me by telling of all the good work going on in Cambridge. About 50 of the best men here, and about 30 from Oxford have volunteered for Missionary work in Africa and China. A great loss for England, still it is a glorious thing that men like these, from the 'Cambridge Eight,' and men who played cricket for their University, and men who are high up in scholarship—are dedicating their lives to the Mission-field. The preacher Angel of the Revelation¹ must be smiling with pleasure, perhaps it is for the conclusion of his work. Oh, blessed hope!"

After one of her visits to Cambridge, she wrote to Lady Victoria Buxton:

"I never talk *party* politics with the dear young friends at Cambridge, for this conclusive reason that I *have* none! I have only anti-Bradlaugh-ics and Gordon-ics, and so on—things that seem to me to be bound up with morals and religion and honour, and all the rest of the things that go to make up English and Christian character."

Part of two or three winters were spent by her in Italy, to be with Louisa Anstruther and her husband, who was now an invalid, and ordered to be in a warm climate. She still went to Scotland every autumn, taking Lulu O'Rorke to be her happy companion, as her mother had been in former years. At other times she went to her sister at Nonington, where the nearness to Walmer enabled her to revisit the soldiers there. In many houses in London her presence was always welcome, so she was kept in touch with old friends, and made new ones.

Her deepening interest in all that concerned the highest welfare of her country, is shown in her letters to Mr. Gladstone and others, markedly in her righteous indignation at the admission of Mr. Bradlaugh to the House of Commons, and in her deeply rooted dread of Home Rule.

When the result of the General Election, in the return of Mr. Gladstone's party in 1880, was known, she wrote to her sister:

"Too low about the country to write more than a line.

¹ Revelation xiv. 6.

What a loss is the Cabinet with its praying, calm and wise Lord Chancellor ! What injury and misery may not follow, who shall say ? ”

When Mr. Bradlaugh sought to be elected as member for Northampton, she wrote the following letter :

“ *May 14th, 1880.*—My dear Mr. Gladstone,—Will you let your goodness to me in time past, extend itself to the present so far as to allow me to beseech you to save our country from the disgrace and shame of having the Apostle of Atheism, the champion of immorality, seated amongst our rulers. Dear Mr. Gladstone, will you read the 1st Psalm, and gain the blessing promised in its first verse, for yourself and your Cabinet, your Parliament and your country, by refusing to open the way to make the Parliament of Christian England ‘ the seat of the scornful.’ How God would honour, and bless, and prosper you for it.’ Yours ever sincerely and obliged, CATHERINE MARSH.”

Mr. Bradlaugh’s first attempt to enter Parliament was a failure, and the next letter from Lord Cairns shows that Catherine Marsh must have written to him of her thankful rejoicing in this victory for the cause of God’s honour.

“ *Pontresina, June 27th, 1880.*—The Bradlaugh defeat has refreshed me in my loneliness here ; it is a great and happy proof that the instincts of the British people can force their representatives to break away from the chain of party, rather than countenance an insult to God.

“ Thanks, dear Miss Marsh, for all your kind wishes and prayers. It is delightful amidst the lowering and deadening influences of the things of sense and sight, and in the downward gravitation of the heart, to read words which remind us of, and realise the one incomparable happiness and blessing, His Presence, His Peace, His Service, His Crown.”

Lord Cairns’s good hope about the British people was afterwards crushed, when the Affirmation Bill was brought in for the express purpose of enabling Mr. Bradlaugh to take his seat in Parliament, the House of Commons having reversed its own verdict.

Though Catherine Marsh was firm in her conviction of

what was right, yet, as this letter to the Duke of Argyll shows, she was willing to consider what there was to be said for the other side :

“ *April 21st, 1880.*—My dear Duke,—How very kind of you to spare the time to write to me. Thank you so much for your letter, and for that enchanting one in *The Times* not long ago. Not until you told me did I know that you approved of the Affirmation Bill. When you spoke on the subject, I must have missed your speech—perhaps I was nursing some dear one, and too anxious to study the papers. It was just as well that I did not know of it—lest the eloquence and power of the speaker should have brought me over to the wrong side. I can see that there are strong things in favour of it; but as they were never brought to the front until after the result of that unhappy day when, in place of the good man, and good Liberal who had represented Northampton—the man who has done as much to ruin morals, as well as faith, as it was in his power to do, was brought forward for the post. I cannot help feeling that the fate of Great Britain is now trembling in the balance, while the choice is being made. ‘ Shall God be honoured in our Parliament—or a God-insulting Atheist?’—Ever, my dear Duke, yours most sincerely, CATHERINE MARSH.”

During this summer, affairs in Ireland were going on from bad to worse. Catherine Marsh was in correspondence with a poor Protestant widow whose cottage had been fired into, and her little girl of six years old shot in both legs. The mother wrote that they were now under police protection; but their only safety was to be in going to Australia, for “ if she were to return to her own home, her life would not be worth an hour’s purchase.”

This was no solitary instance, it shows the treatment the scattered Protestants would receive if the protection of the Imperial Parliament was withdrawn. The reign of the Land League’s lawless cruelty had many other victims, men, women, children, and dumb animals.

In the autumn Lord Cairns sent a brighter account from the North of Ireland.

*“Parkmount, Belfast, November 27th, 1880.—*It was most kind of you to take such real interest in my visit to Ireland. A sister of mine wrote to ask me if it was true that I had received a threatening letter about my visit. I replied that I had received several, but they all came from much valued correspondents, who did not conceal their names, and who spoke rather in terms of entreaty than of menace ! But here we are, and we do not mean to go south of this ; and here everything is very quiet, and as loyal and as much disgusted with the evil doings elsewhere, as in England. So we thank God, and take courage : but our hearts bleed for those who are in danger and penury, and despair in other parts of this unfortunate country.”

In the light of all that has taken place since war was declared on August 4th, 1914, the following letter from Mr. Nassau Jocelyn to Catherine Marsh has a special interest :

*“British Legation, Darmstadt, January 7th, 1881.—*We live indeed in troublous times, and it does not take a very far-seeing eye to understand that they are not likely to become less so. Here, in Germany, rank unbelief and contempt of God’s word and worship are the order of the day, and things get worse from year to year. Then, again, to any one who watches and looks, it is too evident that the great magazine is ready, and the train laid, and but a spark is needed to bring on such a War as the world has never seen ! It is no time for trifling—but eminently one to examine ourselves and to see that we are really and heartily on the Lord’s side. I need not say that your dear little Testament never leaves me wherever I go, and I thank you again and again for it.”

Troublous times they were. In March 1881 the assassination of Alexander II, Czar of Russia, startled Europe. Lord Shaftesbury, Catherine Marsh’s constant correspondent, in his letter to her about the cruel crime, wrote a sentence which is a true forecast of what is happening in the great European War.

“Here is the great Emperor, with an army of 600,000 men, an immense police, and no end of human precautions

for his defence—and what do they avail him? ‘Except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain.’ If Governments, nations, and individuals would lay this truth seriously to heart we might have times of decency and peace. Few events in history have, all things considered, surpassed, in atrocity and fearfulness, this detestable assassination. *The passion for murder by explosives will become epidemic, perhaps normal.* All this betokens the approaching end of the actual state of things under which we are living.”

In this summer the civilized world was horrified by another cruel crime, the assassination of President Garfield. Catherine Marsh wrote to Mrs. Garfield out of the fullness of her heart’s sympathy and had a very grateful letter by the hand of her secretary.

Lord Shaftesbury in a letter to Catherine Marsh showed his deep appreciation of this great American. He wrote :

“I mourn over Garfield. It is a human loss. It goes beyond even America and England. Read the history of the man—what he was as a boy—then a labourer, a barge-driver, president of a college, a soldier, President of the United States, and through all a vigorous Christian. Would our Lord send us but half a dozen such men to form a Cabinet, I should go to my grave believing that England was yet safe.”

Then, in June, came the news of the bombardment of Alexandria. Troops were hurriedly sent off to Egypt—and Catherine Marsh was on the alert as of old to provide that the soldiers should have Testaments to take with them. Later on she must have sent out a consignment of her books, for the officers and men of the Navy, for there is a letter to her from Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour¹ dated *Helicon*, Ismailia, September 1st, 1882, thanking her for them, and saying “they should be distributed according to her request among the ships and hospitals.”

But the interest taken by Catherine Marsh in the affairs of her country never lessened her devotion to the spiritual needs of all within her reach. Her faith which rested

¹ Afterwards Lord Alcester.

without questioning on a Divine promise, was made to some deeply troubled hearts, and to some doubting minds, what the grasp of a rescuing hand is to a drowning man.

This summer while at Cromer she was at a garden-party of Lady Buxton's at Colne House, and her conversation with a stranger she met there is an instance of this. It is told in a letter to her sister.

"This lady after we had been talking alone together told me about her own conversion, and then that some of her children had been converted, but that her youngest son had died since, utterly unconverted, and with a tone of great anguish she added: 'lost.' I said 'you must never say such a word nor think such a thought again, it is treason to your God! He is saved, for he was in the covenant—you had put him there by your prayers, you trusted him to a covenant-keeping God.' Her face lighted up, and with her eyes filling, she said, 'Well, his last faint expiring words were "my sins"—and then "Saviour."' 'Oh, then,' I said, 'dear lady, you have not the chance of honouring God by walking by faith. He has let you walk *by hearing*, for "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."' Afterwards she said to Lady Buxton, 'the burden of years has rolled away'—and to me, 'You can never know how happy God has made me through those words'—so I can only say: 'Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.'"

C. M. to a mother whose son had died almost suddenly, when away from her:

"I hope you have sent back those books that you ask me about. I know nothing, and will know nothing, about Heaven (till I get there) excepting what I learn out of the Bible. About what 'the second death' means—or whether any escape from that death, into Life Eternal, what is the good of trying to raise the black curtain—which God in His infinite knowledge of human nature has dropped before our eyes—and by our own rotten ropes! Cannot we rest quietly for the short time left us on this side of it, in the absolute certainty that He 'Who spared not His own

Son ' but gave Him up for us all, will do the very best for us all, that even He can think of. *What* that is, taking into account the whole Host of Heaven, and the Universe, where can we find the man who can weigh everything and then tell us ! But I do know this—that God's wisdom and justice are all modified and rounded off, and excelled exceedingly *by His love*.

" Now, my darling, you must not have one doubt about your precious boy being with his and your Saviour. He was ' in the Covenant ' and he loved ' Peace, perfect peace,' and has got it."

The source and the secret of the strength of her faith, was her vivid realization of the Personal Friendship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When she was speaking with an unbeliever about what her Saviour was to herself, he said, " No one ever spoke to me in this way before. Why yours is not a Church, nor a Creed, but a Person, a living Person, a Friend," and she replied, " Yes, and a Saviour."

At another time when she was speaking with a friend upon the subject of the Divine Friendship and what the comfort was of being able to confide *everything* to the Lord Jesus, she ended with the words, " and He never repeats," a sentence which her friend never forgot.

Here is her good advice to one who was troubling herself, as to whether, when she had acted conscientiously, she had done rightly :

" You must not look back, it is Satan's temptation. You prayed and you did what seemed the one thing you ought to do, and you have no business to look back. You are forbidden to do it, ' forgetting those things that are behind,' is the direction given us. We must not wreck our brains, nor let anybody else do it. Infidels may, poor, poor fellows,—but as God's children believing He has not deceived us when He promised Guidance, we should trust Him; He is in honour bound to lead us right."

One of Catherine Marsh's characteristics was a great dread of pain, which nevertheless she could bear bravely,

as when in the dusk of an evening in October, one of her fingers was crushed by the hurried shutting of a carriage door, she only said, "Open the door quickly, and drive to the nearest surgeon." She walked calmly into the consulting room, but the moment her hand was touched, she fell back in a dead faint.

For a long time she had much pain to bear, and it was feared that her hand would be disfigured, and that the nail could not grow again; but at last it did, and her finger returned to its perfect shape.

She had a great love for animals, and the next letters will show that she looked upon her horse as quite a friend; she had told Louisa Anstruther that the horse, Kent, had been ill, and now she wrote :

"Kent is so much better of his influenza that he has taken Lucy and me for a short drive to-day. When we returned, and Henry was giving him his bit of bread for me, as I cannot see well enough to do so now, he turned from him, quite round, till he could see me, and he stood gazing as if to say, 'Old friend, are you not glad to see me alive? I am glad to see you again.' And he listened when I told him how dear he was to me. Who shall say that these loving creatures will not live, and love eternally!"

Some years later she wrote of Kent's successor: "My dear gentle Egypt, Victor's gift to me, and the out-of-door comfort of my life, is dead. I had to sign his death warrant, for I heard he was in agony, and the vet said it would be mercy to shoot him. It was all over in a moment, and Egypt's dear love for me was gone from earth. The last time I saw him before he was so ill, he gave me his farewell with such a long gaze of his beautiful clear eyes. But I believe he will be one of the white horses that will follow the glorious King when He rides forth from Heaven, conquering and to conquer."

With her dread of pain and her love of animals, she could not but feel a horror of vivisection, and this drew her into friendship with the late Miss Frances Power Cobbe, with whom she had much interesting correspondence, and two of Miss Cobbe's letters follow next.

Miss Power Cobbe to C. M. :

“My dear Friend,—I should despair of making you understand all I feel about such a letter as yours—how much I long that a perfect and entire sympathy could exist—that I could do and believe all you would have me, and also how well I understand all you think of my religious state. The answer that comes naturally to my lips is only a fervent ‘God bless you’ but (knowing that you will not dream I want to argue) I will just ask you to look into the little book I send, and you will see that at least I too believe in the infinite Love above us, though I call Him only God and Father, and bless Christ for having taught us to love Him better. Would that I were faithful, or good, or loving enough, or in any way spiritually-minded so as to have any share of your triumphant faith and peace.—Yours heartily, FRANCES POWER COBBE.”

Again she wrote :

“My dear kind Friend,—Your letter touched me deeply : you speak of your sense of failing life, this is not a grief to you I know, but I would say let the world have you yet awhile to warm its coldness, and rebuke its sin. We shall meet before very long, my very dear, good friend, for I too am old and failing, in the world where the broken lights of our earthly faiths will all blend in the white light of Heaven’s morning. I do not doubt it. I shall ever think of you with grateful affection.”

Year after year the circle was enlarging of those who looked for Catherine Marsh’s annual card of prayers. In some homes her prayers for the nation formed part of the family worship every Sunday. Many of her friends kept the card in their Bibles, and found the personal prayer a daily help, and others made it widely known.

Lord Cairns to C. M. :

“*January 3rd*, 1882.—Thank you for the copies of your excellent and comprehensive prayer, which we have circulated very widely here. May it and all your words written and spoken this year be greatly blessed to the end

you so much desire, the spread of the knowledge of our glorious Master's love and goodness."

Catherine Marsh's only brother had been in failing health for a long time, and on January 12th, 1882, he died. On the same day she wrote to their eldest sister, Mrs. Trench, who had been hindered by her own illness from going to him :

"At half past seven o'clock this morning, our beloved Brother entered into rest. He passed away in perfect peace into his Saviour's Presence. Dear Rose and I were on either side of him, and Matilda in an armchair close by.

"What a welcome he has had from his Saviour, and from our father and mother and sister and from his lovely little Rosamund."

On the day of his funeral, in the midst of a great snow-storm, she was returning to London with Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers, when the incident occurred, described in the following letter which was published in a local newspaper about a fortnight after Catherine Marsh's death.

"Many years ago I went to visit a kind-hearted Office colleague who was dying from an incurable disease. I had known him in the days of his health and high spirits, when he loved the things of this world too well to give much heed to the things of the next. But I found him ready and eager to listen to the Word of God, and to receive the consolation of Christ's wonderful salvation, and to my astonishment he handed me a well-worn Testament, saying that for many years he had read a chapter every day, according to a promise made to the giver. It then transpired that on a snowy day in London, when no cabs could be obtained, he had befriended an old gentleman and two ladies who had arrived at Victoria Station, and escorted them to their destination. He was asked to visit them before they left Town. He then did so, and the Testament was given to him by one of the ladies, Miss Marsh. I wrote to her at Feltwell Rectory, and told her of his illness, and from that time to the day of his death, my friend continually received comforting letters, and gifts of kindness. Perhaps the most precious of all these

was a sheet of paper with these lines written in her own hand :

‘In peace let me resign my breath,
And Thy salvation see;
My sins deserve Eternal death,
But Jesus died for me.’

“The Testament was buried with him.

“A. S. D.”

At this time she was anxiously watching the course of events in Parliament, and she wrote the following letter on March 30th, 1882 :

“My dear Mr. Gladstone,—You have ever been so kind to me, may I humbly entreat now—please be *moderate* in your demand for the clôture. I cannot bear that your wonderful name should be bandied about the country as the destroyer of British liberties.—Ever your grateful
CATHERINE MARSH.”

In May, 1882, the murders of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke in Dublin staggered England.

Many people in this country felt how great was the need that a day should be appointed for national humiliation and prayer. The next letter tells that Catherine Marsh had written to Lord Cairns on the subject, for he replied :

“*May 21st*, 1882.—I fear there is no prospect of a Day of Humiliation, as the proposal must come from the Prime Minister, and the Government, who do not seem to recognize the need. What a state they have brought Ireland to! They cannot govern it themselves, and they have made it almost impossible for any others to govern it.”

Unfortunately her letter to Lord Cairns which he describes in his reply, is not forthcoming.

“*November 2nd*, 1882.—Thank you so very much for your letter of the 24th, and for the very kind and interesting things it contained; I like it extremely and wish much I could think it would reach and affect the judgment of the House of Commons! but I greatly fear the ignorance of constituencies, and their blind subservience to the

‘Grand Old Man,’ will force their members to vote for what in their hearts they hate.”

On Advent Sunday, 1882, Dr. Tait, the Archbishop of Canterbury, died.

Catherine Marsh wrote to her sister :

“So the beloved Archbishop has gone Home, and has left his Church of England widowed; good God help us now. How I wish I had gone down to see him. I hope he had my last letter, I think it would have suited him better than learned ‘death-bed consolations.’ What a Homecoming he has had! To his Saviour, to the Church triumphant, to his beloved wife, his dear delightful Craufurd, and to his nursery of sweet little children, swept away from him so long ago. My soul rejoices for him in the midst of my grief for his loss.”

This letter from Mr. Froude shows what had been the subject of Catherine Marsh’s letter to him.

“*January 3rd, 1883.*—My dear Miss Marsh,—It was a real delight to me to see your handwriting again—with the practical proof that the use of your eyes had been given back to you.¹ Lady Ashburton had told me of it. Next to life sight is our greatest blessing. Indeed to me without sight life would be no blessing at all.

“For the substance of what you say to me you know that I am heartily grateful to you. You and I would not express our thoughts on these momentous subjects exactly in the same language. It would be wrong in me to pretend that I thought exactly as you do, while to try to force myself into holding this and that opinion would only be possible if I were convinced that such opinion was right. And then no pressing would be necessary. But I will not allow myself on this account to be separated in heart from them whom I generally admire and sympathize with. There is an old saying ‘if I love you I do not ask you to love me in return.’ You must leave me to my Master and yours.

“I hope to see you again. Should you at any time be

¹ An attack of inflammation in her eyes made her blind for a time.

Lady Ashburton's guest I am sure that you will let me know.—Yours most truly, J. A. FROUDE."

In January 1884 anxious accounts came from the Soudan; and on the 30th Catherine Marsh printed a call to prayer. In it she wrote—

"At this moment the great and gallant Gordon, and his no less gallant comrade Colonel Stewart are on their way to a fiery furnace of danger . . . exposed as a prey to the countless human wolves of the Desert."

The tidings of their danger roused a strong feeling in the country, and her whole heart went with it.

Notwithstanding General Gordon's urgent appeals, delay followed delay on the part of the Government; it was not till August that the Force for his relief was sent out; and when it reached its destination, it was forty-eight hours too late!

When it was known that measures were being taken to send troops to Khartoum, Catherine Marsh wrote her thankfulness about it to Lord Northbrook, and he replied:

"*August 14th, 1884.*—Pray accept my warmest thanks for your most kind letter and the little book. I still have the New Testament and the Psalms you gave me before I went to India. I quite agree with you as to the difficulty of my work in Egypt. You must not rely on the newspapers with regard to what goes on in the Cabinet. I have not the principal direction of military matters; and any special credit for the decision of the Government as to preparations to relieve General Gordon should undoubtedly be given to Lord Hartington, and not to yours very sincerely and obliged, NORTHBROOK."

In January 1885, when Catherine Marsh was staying with Lord and Lady Cairns at Bournemouth, she wrote to her sister:

"What a number of broken hearts this lovely sunshiny morning will fail to touch with its cheering, the hearts of those whose loved ones lie in that far Soudan, either in their graves, or in ambulance hospitals. The Lord comfort the sorrowful and the suffering, and reveal Himself to the dying. And the same Lord of all power and might dispose the Boers to peace."

This undated letter was written from Bournemouth, probably at this time, to Mrs. Laurence :

“ During the last few days I could not write; dying people whose homes were in different directions, from 4 to 7 miles distant, had sent to ask me to come to them. Yesterday I went to one who was very unhappy. She said she ‘ could not tell whether she had repented enough,’ and thought, even after hearing the most world-wide invitations of the Lord Jesus that probably He would still reject her ! So I took her thin white hand in mine, and said, ‘ Then it is time that dear Lady Aberdeen, who kindly brought me here, should drive me to the nearest station, that as the express rushes by I may lay my head under it. Life would be intolerable anguish if one had to doubt the friend most honoured and loved upon earth—but if *my Saviour* can break His word, and cast away one soul that comes to Him to be saved, let my head not only be ground into dust, but my soul be crushed into nothing likewise. The whole Universe may as well come to the same end too—if He Who is “ the Truth,” the soul of honour to His Whole creation—can fail us for one single moment.’

“ There came such a lovely light into that dying woman’s eyes. ‘ What ! ’ she said, ‘ is that the way you believe—not in His promises, but in Himself; it makes me begin to trust Him.’ And I think He began to give her troubled heart *rest* then and there.”¹

From Bournemouth she went to St. Giles’s House; it proved to be her last visit there. Again she wrote to her sister :

“ We made our happy junction, Lucy, Lulu, Annie and I, and came on together here. Dear Lord Shaftesbury’s welcome was delightful. He looks sadly worn, but seems as vigorous in mind as ever. He has just been showing us amongst other treasures the patchwork quilt which the ragged children made for him, and which he always has on his bed ! His conversation was even more delightful than ever, full of a marvellous variety of interests.”

¹ The sequel is told in her book, *The Rift in the Cloud*. Nisbet & Co., London.

Some idea of the state of the country is seen in the next letter from Lord Shaftesbury to her. Some of his words are prophetic of the German methods in the European war.

“*January, 1885.*—Have you language in which to express what you feel on these Satanic outrages? The present is terrible, the future far more so—every day adds to the power and facility of the means of destruction. Science is hard at work, (science, the great, nay to some the only, God of these days,) to discover and concentrate the shortest and easiest methods to annihilate the human race. And, moreover, agents to accomplish these ends are increasing in number, experience, skill, and malignity. It is the same now all the world over, but very specially in Europe. Is not the universal condition of living and acting, very similar to that which preceded the Deluge—when we are also told ‘the earth was filled with violence’?”

In February, a Battalion of the Guards was going out to the Soudan, and Catherine Marsh went to London, to stay with her cousin, Charlotte Leycester, in the hope of getting an opportunity of seeing something of them. Her hope was more than fulfilled, for her friend, Colonel Francis Bridgeman¹ was able to arrange that she should have a free access into Wellington Barracks. She was now in her sixty-seventh year, but her energy was undiminished, so she was ready to go at any hour when the call for her came from the Barracks. Thus she wrote :

“I have been almost living in the Guards’ Barracks. This morning I was there by 6.45 for a farewell, and again by 9.45 for a second 400. Now I am going at their call to spend three hours this evening in visiting the young soldiers, to seek to lead them to our Saviour.”

When the tidings reached England that on January 26th Khartoum had been taken by the Mahdi, the blow fell like a thunderbolt upon the country.

Catherine Marsh wrote a short “In Memoriam” sketch

¹ Brigadier-General the Hon. Francis Bridgeman, son of the third Earl of Bradford. At the age of 71 he was in command of the Central London Volunteer Corps, when his sudden death occurred in September, 1917.

of General Gordon, "hot from her heart," as she had written in the Mutiny time.

It was a lamentation for "as noble a heart as ever beat in a soldier—a heart ever true to his Queen, his country, his God. The heart that made him share his bread with the hungry, and his friendship with the friendless, that led him to pray with the dying by day or by night, throbbed for the miseries of the slaves, leading him to risk his life like a thing of nought, in his efforts to put a stop to its accursed traffic—that heart, pierced by the Mahdi's spears, through the treachery of some of the very men whom he had sacrificed everything to save. Yet their treachery could not have wounded his heart so deeply, as the long months of suspense while the ingratitude of his country was slowly borne in upon his soul. Abandoned by England! But he wrote, 'I am not alone, for I have great confidence in my Saviour's Presence.'"

Miss Gordon wrote to tell her how much she appreciated the little book, and sent her the copy of *Clarke's Scripture Promises*, which her brother had had with him in the Holy Land, a gift she greatly treasured.

Long afterwards she often spoke of 1885 as a year of sorrows; and now the first of its three special sorrows was soon to come to pass.

On hearing that Lord Cairns was not well, she quickly made a crocheted jacket for him, a pattern of her own invention, very comfortable for an invalid. She made them for her relations and friends, suiting the colours to the wearers, a pale blue for a fair girl, crimson for a dark-eyed child, purple for an Archbishop,¹ and so forth. Here is Lord Cairns' opinion of the jacket:

"*March 3rd, 1885.*—Dear Miss Marsh,—I cannot thank you enough for your beautiful jacket, which fits me as if it had been made by my tailor, and for style and workmanship is the admiration of all beholders. It will be no small

¹ Dr. Alexander, Primate of the Church of Ireland. He wrote to her on October 10, 1904: "My beautiful purple coat, woven by your hand, has proved a real comfort to me in my three months of severe illness."

consolation to me, when I next have breakfast in bed, to feel that I have such a garment to wear; and that it is your work and gift will much enhance the wearer's happiness.—Most sincerely and affectionately yours, CAIRNS."

This was probably the last letter she had from him, for the close of the earthly time of this helpful friendship was drawing near. They met again, for she was staying with him and Lady Cairns in London, when on the 24th of this month he made his last speech in Exeter Hall. It was on the claims of "the heathen and Mahommedan world upon Christians." It was an enthusiastic meeting, the farewell for "The Cambridge Seven,"¹ who were just leaving for Missionary work in China. Their example had stirred the hearts, and wakened the consciences of many to these claims, and some 2000 young men of all classes were present to listen to the address.

The following morning Catherine Marsh left London, and Lord Cairns and his family returned to Bournemouth, and the next day he caught a chill. After a few days' illness, and a short time of danger, in full consciousness and in perfect peace, he passed into the immediate presence of Him of Whom he had said in years gone by, "The Lord Jesus Christ does satisfy even *here* when we are *in full communion with Him*. What will it be to enjoy it without a break between."

C. M. to Victor Buxton :

"*Good Friday night, 1885.*—My dearest Victor,—This has been a heavy week to me. Standing by Lord Shaftesbury's side on Wednesday (as I passed through London) and fearing it might be for the last time, I little thought

¹ Montagu (afterwards the Rev. Sir Montagu) Beauchamp, many years in China, ordained in 1906; William W. Cassells, afterwards Bishop of West China; D. E. Hoste, afterwards Director of Chinese Inland Mission; Arthur Polhill, afterwards ordained in the Church of England; Cecil Polhill, who was in the Buffs. These brothers were in the Eton XI and Football Teams, and also in both 'Varsity Teams, Cricket and Football. Stanley P. Smith was Stroke of the 'Varsity boat; he is still working as a missionary in China. Charles T. Studd was in the Eton, Cambridge and All-England XI; he carried on Missionary work ten years in China and seven years in India; later he became founder of the Heart of Africa Mission.

that another beloved and honoured friend, scarcely less thoughtfully kind, and true, and brother-like, was then lying at the gate of Death, but the gate of Life to him. Thank God, Lord Shaftesbury is better—he has sent me a line from his own sick couch, with the sad tidings that he had just heard. What an irreparable loss to the country Lord Cairns' death will be, for he was a man of faith, of prayer, of power. A man who was called in the Conservative Cabinet 'the central calm.' When a member of it asked Lady Cairns the secret of this calmness, she replied, 'My Husband never goes to any Cabinet Council without spending half an hour before it alone with his God.'

"Lady Gwendolen Cecil told me that she heard her father (Lord Salisbury) speaking of Lord Cairns to Lord Beaconsfield, and calling his intellect 'colossal'—'and transcendent,' added Lord Beaconsfield. And this man was almost the humblest Christian I have ever known, and the most implicit believer. He laid every power at His Saviour's Feet, consecrating his all to Him.

"Do you remember how he enjoyed seeing all the young 'University' faces at his *last* meeting at Exeter Hall. I went home with him and Lady Cairns, and we had such a delightful evening, speaking of the things touching the King.

"Now he has seen the King in His beauty, and what a Good Friday he has had in His Presence."

After his death, Lord Coleridge, his opponent in politics, speaking in the House of Lords, gave this fine tribute to his character. He first described Lord Cairns's "great commanding qualities, his powerful mind, and his lofty nature," and then he told of him that "after having a difference with a man inferior to himself in every respect, Lord Cairns was the first to come forward with a frank admission, and desire to continue the friendship, which showed he was as good and generous as he was great and commanding."

Later on at the request of Lady Cairns and her family, Catherine Marsh wrote a short sketch of Lord Cairns's life,

and at its conclusion she summed up his character thus, he was "a man whose constant habit it was to do God's Will as revealed in His Word, alike in the great occasions of public life, and in the smallest details of daily duty."

The second sorrow came on July 15th, in the death of her dear brother-in-law, Frederick Chalmers. Thenceforward her deep love for her sister became, if possible, more tender than ever.

Among all the letters of sympathy, none came nearer her heart than Miss Nightingale's.

"How truly do we mourn and grieve—it is the breaking up of a whole chapter in the history of Christ's Church—that of Beckenham, and the names of Marsh and Chalmers—a breaking up, but only as the land is broken up to let the good seed bear thirty-fold and a hundred-fold. How much has sprung out of Beckenham that can never die. How grandly you and yours and other teachers from that fold, are still working for Christ and for Eternity.

"If the deepest sympathy could afford a moment's comfort to Mrs. Chalmers, that sympathy is hers. And oh how glorious the re-union soon, in the immediate presence of the Lord, of the Almighty Father.

"May God bless and comfort you, and keep us all. And may God continue to prosper your wonderful work.—Ever yours, FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE."

In this autumn came the third and greatest of the sorrows. Lord Shaftesbury's failing health filled Catherine Marsh's thoughts with anxiety. Her friendship with a mind and heart like his, the sharing of his great interests in his frequent letters, his sharing hers in return, and the comfort of his power of sympathy with small, as well as with great troubles, had enriched her life, and now she knew it was passing away. Her friendship had been much to him. His spirit, heavily weighted with the sorrows and suffering of the poor, and of the oppressed of whom he had been the unwearied champion, was liable to sink into depression, and her bright spirit, strong faith, and the charm of her conversation and her letters, made her friendship a cordial, adapted to his needs. His friends under-

stood this. "Our 'great and good' is coming to Broadlands," wrote Lord Mount Temple, "do come to meet him, for you cheer him better than any one else."

On October 1st Lord Shaftesbury passed through the gate of Death, and his departure left a blank in her life that never could be filled. But the seeking to win souls for Christ, which she had called "the undying interest," always remained for her, and this prevented her spirits from sinking; and she loved the more the friends who still were left to her.

To return to the public events which had been occurring and which had filled Catherine Marsh's thoughts, first with intense anxiety, then with great thankfulness.

Clôture, as Closure was then called, was first applied in the House of Commons on February 24th, 1885; and on April 8th, 1886, Mr. Gladstone introduced his first Home Rule Bill to the House of Commons. Its injustice called forth the generous determination of such leaders of the Liberal party, as Lord Hartington, afterwards Duke of Devonshire, Mr. (afterwards Lord) Goschen, Sir Henry (afterwards Lord) James, Lord Selborne, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and others, to put principles before party, and to cease to follow Mr. Gladstone in this new departure.

Catherine Marsh, in a printed letter headed, "Before it is too late," besought all who valued religious freedom to awake to the danger that threatened the Protestants in Ireland; and all patriots also, to resist the Bill which threatened the dismemberment of the Empire.

When the Home Rule Bill was introduced, Catherine Marsh sent out an appeal for prayer to be made for its overthrow. In it she wrote :

"After the revelations that startled the House of Commons, when in the pride of their power over the Government, the Nationalists betrayed the secrets of their intentions, there can be no more blind-fold support given to this measure." She reminded her readers that the passing of this Act, while it withdrew the protection of the Imperial Parliament from the Loyalists in Ireland, would

make over, to the Land Leaguers and the priests, the power of making a Bill of Attainder, and of dispensing with that charter of our liberties, the Habeas Corpus Act.

Her faith was firm that prayer would prevail. She ended with the words, "He that is our God, is the God of deliverances."

With Mr. Gladstone in power, the Home Rulers began to calculate on the fruits of their expected victory; buildings, etc., belonging to Protestants in Ulster, were having their fate decided in lotteries: in one parish the Rectory was drawn for 2s. 6d. and all the houses of Protestants were to be disposed of in like manner, the Church was destined to be a court-house and the Methodist Chapel a gaol. But as the writer who told this adds, "They are reckoning without our God."

She corresponded with some of the leading people in Ulster, and when the final decision was near, it was arranged by letters and telegrams that, as far as possible, the night of the closing debate should be kept by the Protestants as a watch-night of prayer. Great was the thanksgiving to God at the downfall that night of the Home Rule Bill.

Many friends wrote to rejoice with her, none more heartily than Caroline Maitland:

"*June 8th, 1886.*—O Marny,¹ I do think of you to-day. How you have prayed, how you have worked, and how you are giving thanks now. You have stirred up slower, colder people, and some at least have caught fire from you; and most of all you have gone straight to the only really ruling Power, and you *have* been heard and answered. When the world's story is told you will be seen to have pulled its strings, and brought down showers of blessing."

During this spring Sir Robert Anstruther was enabled by a measure of returning health to take up his Parliamentary duties. He had been a staunch Liberal until the Home Rule Bill broke up the party. When the night

¹ This name became dear to many of those who loved her. It was given her by her eldest adopted daughter as an abbreviation of Mother-Auntie.

came for the final debate upon it, and every vote against its passing was of importance, he went to the House of Commons, though suffering from a heart attack at the time. His high sense of duty carried him through the effort, but the strain had been too great. He was just able to return to his home in Scotland, but his illness increased rapidly, and when scarcely past the prime of life, he died on the 21st of July.

Again Catherine Marsh wrote to Mr. Gladstone :

“*July 24th*, 1886.—Dear Mr. Gladstone,—May I speak? And will you be so gracious as to listen? A niece of mine heard from Nisbet, the publisher in Berners Street, the other day—that you had bought a little packet of my *Suggestions of Prayer for Ireland*. I have nothing to do with party politics. But next to the Blessed Christ of God Himself that which comes nearest, and is *dearest* to my heart of hearts, is His Christianity pure and simple, as set forth in His Word. And (necessarily) next to this, freedom to read and circulate that Holy Word, and to worship Him according to its teaching. You know *far* better than I can, and you have taught me (and have taught hundreds of thousands more)—that the Church of Rome—infallible as she states herself to be—is essentially intolerant. And intolerance—(especially where priests rule over the laity)—*can* only mean persecution, where there is power to carry it out. Therefore day and night have I cried to God for our Protestants in Ireland—and have done what little I could to persuade others to pray for them also. Your great soul will take in at once that there is nothing personal in this—least of all to such a ‘*friend*’ as you have so kindly condescended to call yourself and as Mrs. Gladstone so kindly said—when the pleasant honour of meeting you was last given me (at Lady Ashburton’s). But oh might I say (as how often I *pray*) God of His mercy grant that the unrivalled gifts of that magnificent intellect may be thrown with their whole weight of world-wide influence on the side of Christ’s Truth, and never on the side of that system which (however blessed and saint-like multitudes brought up

in it may have been)—‘Consults to cast Him down from His excellency,’ by sharing it with created beings—and which ‘takes away the key of knowledge’ from the people.—Ever your grateful CATHERINE MARSH.”

But her keen interest in all that concerned her country and even her deep distress at the threatening dangers, could not absorb all her thoughts: they often sped far away from this troublesome world to the “Land of pure delight;” and her realization of the life to come was vivid and inspiring.

It was about this time that she wrote to Miss Maitland:

“Heaven will be a lovely place to live in! for there no shadow can ever again fall between us and our Saviour, or between us and our beloved ones through all Eternity, *because* our hearts will be *one* with our ‘altogether lovely’ King, so that we shall delight in whatever He wishes—and more wonderful to say, He will delight in wishing what we wish ‘that our joy may be full’ for it is His good pleasure that at His right hand there should be *fulness* of joy for His own, and pleasures for evermore.

“I am quite sure that He is preparing wondrous surprises of joy and delight for us, such as we never dreamt of, for ‘eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man,’ nor even of woman,—or of the still gayer fancy of children,—‘to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.’ And we *do* love Him, poor as our love may be, still, we *do love* Him.”

Not long after she had written this letter, Heaven became still dearer to her, for after a long illness her loved sister Mary Trench died unexpectedly in a short attack of bronchitis, in the night of March 4th, 1887.

C. M. to C. F. M.:

“*March 5th.*—Our precious Mary needs our prayers no more, for they are all answered. She went Home to her Saviour, leaving her sweet testimony to Him with her dying lips. ‘His loving kindness’ were the last words we heard from them.” Hers was a character of no common charm. At the beginning of her illness, her brother-

in-law, the Archbishop of Dublin, had written to her husband :

“ ‘ This is a sorrow of sorrows—need I say how earnestly we pray that one so greatly loved, so infinitely precious, who lights up the world through which she moves, may yet be restored.’ ”

Early in the following year this pleasant letter came from Miss Nightingale :

“ *February 20th, 1887.*—Dearest Miss Marsh,—My warmest thanks for your beautiful little book, and above all for your so kindly writing with your own hand. God bless you ever. Thousands of prayers will be yours, for you. Do you remember in your ‘ Death and Life ’ in the Cholera Wards of the London hospital—a letter from the landlord of a young man who was prayed back to life again : and who sent you a copy of Landseer’s dog ? I gave our Lea School Master copies of your ever beautiful, ever fresh and fruitful books, for his school library. He is by name Ebenezer Butler, and he immediately discovered this letter to be by his father. He was quite eager about it, and he made me send six copies to his mother who still lives. I so often hear of you in these and many other ways.

“ Fare you very well. I shall never get this letter off if I try to finish it, which after all is only a poor word to tell you how we thank you for all you have done for us to make us know Christ, and to say, Christ be with you—as He is.—Yours ever, FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.”

This was the year of Queen Victoria’s first Jubilee. Catherine Marsh entered heartily into the thankful rejoicing it called forth.

C. M. to L. E. O’R. :

“ Lulu, Annie, and I have just come back from Devonshire House where we had a near and splendid view of our beloved Queen, and the whole procession. Often during the two hours of waiting I thought of the words ‘ Behold thy King cometh ’ ! Then when the Queen’s coming was heralded by the splendid Life Guards, by the noble body-guard of the Princes of the blood royal, and by so many of her illustrious friends, I thought of the promise

‘He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe.’

“It was a sight of great magnificence, and we saw it from beneath a pavilion supported by palm-trees, and brilliant with flowers and waving flags. Lord Hartington and John Bright were sitting quite near us, so we were thoroughly under Liberal Unionist auspices!”

Feltwell had only one post in the day, but when Sir Arthur Blackwood¹ was made Secretary to the Post Office he granted the village a second post, much to Catherine Marsh’s pleasure. But that it did not fulfil all her expectations is evident, for she wrote to Louisa Anstruther: “Stevie has won his spurs too easily if our second post never reaches London at night. When he comes back from Canada I shall reverse his K.C.B. to B.C.K., *i.e.* Be Careful Knight, or your spurs shall be seized from you!”

The autumn holiday in 1887 was spent at Llandudno. While there Catherine Marsh had a serious illness, double pneumonia, and some very anxious weeks followed. When she was able for the journey she went to stay with her sister Mrs. Chalmers, and for some time was quite an invalid. Then, as strength began to return, she wrote to Louisa Anstruther: “I do want to live for the precious sake of my Darlings, and as it was told me in my dream at Llandudno, that I must ‘continue a little longer to know more of the exceeding preciousness of the Captain of our Salvation.’”

After the publication of her books she found she had many friends in the Medical Profession when one and another refused to take any fee from her. “You are so often met with in the Hospitals, we consider you as almost one of ourselves,” was the reason given by one for his refusal; while another put his hands behind his back, and said he “had never been so insulted!” One to whom she sent a cheque replied that he would never cash it, but would keep her autograph, and yet another was

¹ He received his K.C.B. at the Jubilee.

her constant kind adviser in the years of her very old age, and said he felt it to be his privilege.

In the winter of 1888, when the Queen of Sweden was at Bournemouth, she heard that Catherine Marsh was there, staying with Lady Cairns. Queen Sophie had long wished to know her, for she greatly valued her books, of which there were Swedish translations. They met several times, and had much interesting converse together, and occasional correspondence afterwards.

In this summer the death of Lady Ailsa brought a great grief to Catherine Marsh's heart. She wrote a very short account of her dearly loved young friend's life and sent a copy of it to Mr. Gladstone, whose eldest son had married Lady Ailsa's younger sister.

C. M. to Mr. Gladstone :

"May I send you this little sketch of one who walked with her Lord and Saviour in a (too rarely) close communion with Him; and who left, by His grace, no shadow across her path of shining light. Most deeply did I love her, and she was in her sweet care for me, almost like a tender daughter. But it is for her children that I grieve immeasurably the most—the loss of such a mother cannot be told by words."

In these later years of Catherine Marsh's life, her love and value for the services of the Church of England grew even deeper and greater as the time went on.

C. M. to M. C. :

"Ascension Day is most delightful to me. All His Work finished, and the gates lifting up their heads, and letting the King of Glory in. O happy Angels, O yet more happy Church triumphant! What depths and heights of joy and happiness for *the Father* when he welcomed back the Son of His delights—a Redeemer, a Saviour, a Conqueror, forever. What it must have been to see Him welcomed Home. But we shall see Him crowned with many crowns, when 'the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign on the earth.'"

C. M. to L. M. C. A. :

"I think I never loved all that Whitsuntide stands for, nor all that it is surrounded with by our Church in its services, so dearly before. The collect for the day, and that for the preceding Sunday, and the passages of Scripture, with the Whitsunday hymns all so helpful and strengthening. Also, I enjoy to-day the discovery of another distinct prayer to the Holy Spirit. Omit the words in italics in the 12th verse of Psalm li. and you will see that in the Hebrew it reads ' Uphold me, free Spirit.' "

When in this summer she wrote to Mr. Gladstone, it was upon a subject about which they were perfectly agreed :

"*July 2nd, 1888.*—My dear Mr. Gladstone,—May I venture to tell you with what depth of joy, with what fervent thanksgiving to God, with what increased earnestness of prayer for blessings upon you, I have read your article in *The Nineteenth Century* touching *Robert Elsmere*, or rather, your grand confession of faith in Christ crucified, risen and glorified. How can I thank God enough that this most splendid effort of sound reasoning, this noble poem in prose—this brief yet unanswerable answer to a theory which would deprive a sinful and miserable world of its hope—and Christians of the strength, the sweetness, and the joy of their hearts and lives—comes before the world lighted by the lustre of *your name*. That review was read to me first when I was very ill with a short relapse of the attack (inflammation of both lungs) which last Autumn so nearly carried me Home—and has left me a sufferer (but surrounded by mercies). The reading of that review of yours, was (and is) one of the gladdening gifts from our Father which I am *thankful* to have been sent back to wait for—when the Lord of Life, Who overcame ' the sharpness of death ' for us, and for ' all believers '—had almost laid His blessed Hand on the Gate of Heaven, to open it for one of the least and lowest of His handmaids.

"I have often longed to tell you *what* a personal Reality He was to me then, how present, how near! how good,

how tender. Less than ever, now, can I bear any one to die without a living Saviour by his side. Let us keep close to Him in life, too—speak to Him about everything—ask His leave before doing anything whether of great or little importance—watch the guiding of His eye—study His Word for answers to all the questions we ask Him,—and beseech Him so to fill us with His Holy Spirit that we may be of one mind with Him in *all* things. ‘One spirit with the Lord of Glory!’—Ever, dear Mr. Gladstone, Yours most gratefully and most sincerely, CATHERINE MARSH.

“I am staying for a short time with my widowed sister, but Feltwell Rectory, Norfolk is still my (happy) home.”

[*The answer.*]

“*July 3rd, 1888.*—My dear Miss Marsh,—It is only a very large measure of charity and indulgence which could have led you to deliver so high an eulogy upon my poor paper. It is very unworthy of the cause in which it has been written. Could I have brought it up to the standard even of my own estimate of that cause, it would have been less unworthy.

“Shortly before this paper I had written another on some tracts published by a notorious Colonel Ingersoll in America: my paper will I hope soon be reprinted in this country in a magazine edited by Mr. Guinness Rogers. Ingersoll is a writer of brilliancy, as Mrs. Humphry Ward is: but infinitely inferior to her in a moral way, for he is little better than a blasphemer while she writes with a serious desire to serve God, though as to the instrument by which He is to be glorified she is sadly mistaken and her book a source of mischief.

“I am indeed glad that your space has been lengthened, as the decree of the Almighty and that effect shows that He has more for you to do. Perhaps you do not know the following lines, which were famous in their day, some 60 years back, or 70: they are by Milman—

‘It matters little at what hour o’ the day
The righteous falls asleep: death cannot come
To him amiss who is prepared to die.
The less of this poor earth, the more of heaven;
The higher life, the earlier immortality.’

“ You speak of the personal relation to Christ, and is it not a great joy to feel that that personal relation has come, amidst all the perils and temptations of the time to contribute so much more widely the substance of preaching within the Church of England and out of it. Happy are they who, like that door-keeper, never go out of the house of their God. A long arduous agitated life only leaves me more convinced that the Son of Man sits and will sit ‘on the throne of His glory.’—With very humble and respectful thanks, I remain, sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.”

C. F. M. to C. M. For her 70th birthday, September 15th, 1888 :

“ This day, your great, full, brave, noble life—so filled up for the last 50 years at least—with loving service, *and such a plenty of it*, has been passing before me while I was walking out in the heather, and I wanted to be with you to tell you how I honour and love you. O some day may I hear the ‘ Well done—good and faithful servant ’ said to you, and see what abundant entrance you will have. But I am glad and grateful to have seen so much of God’s grace in you, on this earth.”

[*The reply.*]

“ What a letter of goodness and generous kindest blindness about me,—and I am such a poor person. My only comfort in looking back is to place it *all* under the atoning Blood of Christ, but *there* it is, and I am at rest.”

This autumn the marriage of her great niece Annie O’Rorke, to Victor, the eldest son of her dear friends Sir Fowell and Lady Victoria Buxton, and himself a dear friend of hers from his school-boy days—was a source of true happiness to her then, and ever after.

For some time past she had been gradually growing blind from cataract, and in the spring of 1888 she hoped it was far enough advanced to allow of an operation. In May she went to Wiesbaden to consult Professor Pagenstecher, Henry and Lucy O’Rorke going with her. To her sister she wrote the account of her first interview with the celebrated oculist :

“In the darkened part of the room, when strong light was flashed into my eye, Pagenstecher said ‘You will yet have good sight. I have seen the optic nerve, and it is sound.’ Before I came here I knew, and was *satisfied* that it would be all right *if* I was to become quite blind, and I had said to my dear Lord, ‘Thy will be done,’—but it *was* a sweet mercy to be allowed to hope again.”

There was a little disappointment when she heard that it would probably be a year before her eye would be ready for the operation. But the journey was not made quite in vain, for she stayed a little while to try the effect of the waters upon her rheumatism, and the result was so good that from that time she was very seldom troubled by it.

On leaving Wiesbaden she was advised to spend a few days at Homburg for bracing, before going back to England. While there she wrote to her sister—

“*Park Hotel, Homburg.*—This evening a message came to me from the Crown Prince of Sweden, who is staying in this Hotel, offering to pay me a visit. I asked his messenger to explain that I had no sitting-room, and to ask if I might go to him instead, and a gracious message was returned, so Lucy and I were shown to his apartments, and he met us at the door of the outer room, and took us to the inner one, placed me in an armchair and sat down beside me. He talked to me of his Royal Mother, with the warmest devotion for her, and I responded by telling him of her kindness and goodness to us at Bournemouth last year. And then I spoke of the Lord Jesus, and he said with earnestness, ‘What could we do without Him!’ so I added ‘What could we do without Him as a Saviour, and as our best and dearest Friend for Life, for death, and for eternity. And then we spoke about ‘that blessed Hope,’ the Coming of the Lord, and when I rose to go, the Prince said so kindly, ‘Do stay a little longer.’”

After her return to England, her blindness steadily increased. She bore the trial not only patiently but cheerfully, and she still continued to write many letters notwithstanding the difficulties which she describes in a letter to Lady Kintore :

"It *is* a trial being too blind to see one's letters, and no mistake! And *rather* a trial not being able to see when my stylograph drops out initial letters, or words, which it has a trick of doing. For instance Lucy looked over a letter of mine, in which she found 'I 'ope you 'ave found a 'igher 'appiness'—etc! That this pen should have been spiteful enough to do it with words beginning with 'h' was too 'impish.'

"Oh it is awkward to live in the same world with one's dearest friend—and not to know 'Where in the world'—she is! It is like that French story of the two who met on the opposite sides of Behring's Straits—made a mere streak by the ebb of the tide—and, looking, they *loved*—and then the tide rolled back—and a whole world divided them!"

About this time she had these interesting letters from Mr. Froude:

"*The Molt, Salcombe. September 13th, 1889.*—My dear Miss Marsh,—You have always been so true a friend to me that I write not in commonplace phrases and say I am sorry to hear so poor an account of you. I am sorry that the way toward the end should have the distress of failing sight attached to it. But it is the rule generally that we break up piece by piece not altogether, and we must take the conditions of it patiently. I certainly cannot look upon the end itself as anything but a dismissal home at the end of a long day's work. I entirely agree with your view that 'resignation' is a word wholly out of place as regards death itself. I do think we may be resigned (and that this is the best which we can attain), to the bodily discomforts connected with its approach, the aches and pains and weary limbs. It is however well arranged to make us all glad to go. Even advancing years which I once dreaded have brought unforeseen advantages, one is relieved of idle ambitions, one knows the limit of one's powers. Hopes and fears as far as this world goes are at an end, for the world can give one nothing that one can any longer care for, and can take away nothing.

Selfish interests lose their hold and one's eye perhaps gains in clearness. All this means, my dear Miss Marsh, that I think daily and hourly and as seriously as you could wish me to do of the near, inevitable and to me welcome change. If I cannot use precisely the same language which you use about it; perhaps I mean the same thing. For you personally I have always felt something more than common regard. I admired your mind and your energy and your character from the first day that we met. I have good reason to remember what you were to me afterwards. Yesterday was my wedding day 28 years ago! I can say nothing about all that, only that you are inseparably connected with the recollections of it.

"I am glad that you are interested in my *Two Chiefs*.¹ The most saintlike people that I have known in my life have been Irish Evangelicals. I have tried to reproduce a specimen of a class of men with whom England in an interval of seriousness planted the whole of Ireland—for foolish pedantry and the blindness of so called statesmen to root out again. I have tried to be just to the Celtic chief too, for the Celtic Irish have been frightfully used too, and may be pardoned if they fly at the nearest representatives of the conquering race, when if they did but know it these very persons would be their best friends. Mahony of Dromore was the original of Colonel Goring. Mahony, however, is much more flexible and he complains of the duel, insisting that a religious man never could have consented to fight. He would have been a great deal more ready himself under the circumstances.—I remain affectionately yours, J. A. FROUDE."

"*January 2nd, 1890.*—My dear Miss Marsh,—How good of you to write to me—with your own hand—and so affectionate a letter. You have always been the same, and your own character has been a living witness to your belief more powerful than a thousand arguments. The God that answers by fire let Him be God. The God that elevates and purifies poor human nature is the God whom all will adore, because they cannot help it. *Truth* may be

¹ The two Chiefs of Dunboy.

hard to find. It must be so, or sincere men would not be seeking it in so many different directions. But we cannot mistake *goodness* which is the living witness of the Spirit. My dear Miss Marsh, I do not wish to flatter you—and I shall pain you if I tell you more of what I think about yourself and about your work. I do not know that even at this time of the year I ought to wish you many more such anniversaries. Your work is almost done. You are waiting here now with failing health and strength—and when the time comes it can only be that having well laid out your talents in this world you may carry them with you into a larger sphere of service—but you may be reconciled to remaining with us a little longer when you think how dear you have made yourself to many others besides your affectionate friend, J. A. FROUDE.”

Another sorrow came to Catherine Marsh when, on March 4th, 1890, the only one left of the family so dear to her heart, died, after only two days’ illness, in the Grand Hotel, Cimiez, where she had been spending the winter. A friend who was in the same hotel wrote of her;

“Dear Lady Rayleigh was so bright, never losing the opportunity of giving a good book, chiefly the one that was nearest to her heart, the Memorials of her beloved brother, and she was always ready with a faithful and wise word on the right side.”

C. M. to L. M. C. A.:

“*Good Friday*, 1900.—By this post you ought to get my short ‘In Memoriam, the late Lady Rayleigh’—*late* seems an untrue word for her, she was never *late*, always *up to date*—and is now *in good time* in the Presence of the King of Glory, and amongst His Saints and Angels. What an Easter Day she will keep! I have looked forward for more than 50 years to the delight of the first Easter Day in Paradise, and still have to hope on for that which I see not yet.”

In the spring of 1890 the journey to Wiesbaden was undertaken again, and this time Mrs. Chalmers joined the

party. She was now eighty years of age, and it was sixty years since she had last gone abroad. She had become quite blind, and the effort she made was well rewarded, for she had sight restored in one of her eyes in which there had been no sight for thirty years—sight that she could use for reading or writing to the end of her life. Her sister was not quite so fortunate. She had good sight at first after the operation, but a few years later it began to fail, mercifully very gradually, until she was quite blind for the last three years of her life.

When their cure was completed they went home to England with very thankful hearts, and they celebrated their restoration to sight, by giving a good treat to the blind people and their teachers, at the Ebury Street School for the Blind.

Soon after her return from Wiesbaden Catherine Marsh went for the first time to the Keswick Convention. Two much-loved young friends, Emily and Alice Watney, whom she had known from their childhood, had sent her an earnest entreaty to join their party and go with them. Louisa Anstruther had written, "I think you ought to go to this Convention. It is such a blessed work to try to make Christians more Christ-like, and your presence there would be a tower of strength." Thus it was decided; she found it brought much refreshment to her heart and soul, and with one exception, the same pleasure was renewed to her every year until the last time, when she was within two months of her ninetieth birthday.

During the earlier years she was able to attend one meeting each day and entered with deep interest into the addresses, and especially those of her old friends, Dr. Moule (afterwards Bishop of Durham), Prebendary Webb-Peploe, Canon Hay Aitken, and others. Henry and Lucy O'Rorke were also among the guests who were assembled at the Derwentwater Hotel year after year, for the week of the Convention. The spirit of Christian love that prevailed, the many opportunities of speaking a word for her Lord and Master, the unexpected sight of friends of former years, and the welcoming of strangers who sought her

help, all combined to make this annual visit a time of real refreshment.

Her newly recovered sight gave her a fresh enjoyment in the familiar scenery of the Lake country; it was like seeing a loved friend's face after a long absence.

On leaving Keswick after her first visit, she wrote to Louisa Anstruther: "I am a giant of strength after ten days at beautiful cool Derwentwater, and they were most delightful days, such an atmosphere of love, and peace, and holiness must penetrate one's being."

The interest of these visits never flagged, and each time they varied. One year she renewed her friendship with a Russian lady, of whom she wrote "Madame Tchertkoff is here, we met yesterday to my great pleasure—she is even more good and more charming than ever."

Then she described an afternoon with the Bishop of Liverpool (Dr. Ryle) and his daughter in their lovely house on Skiddaw; the letter ends "before we left he prayed, with us, such a patriarchal, patriotic, and personal prayer."

She tells of one Sunday in another year that she had "a long visit from that hero, Bishop Tucker,¹ 'baptized for the dead,' after brave Bishop Hannington's murder, and Bishop Parker's sad death by fever in a few months. He told us wondrous things, how when he went expecting to find the infant Church in Uganda crushed by the horrible cruelties and martyrdoms it had suffered, he found 1000 native Christians, baptized indeed also for the dead, and lovely in their holy consistent lives, and ardent piety—and many more marvels of God's grace, he told us. Then came dear Maxwell Wright with glorious things to tell of too, amongst the natives of Madeira, and other places where he has lived and witnessed for Christ. Our sitting-room seemed to have the honour of entertaining Angels."

Here also she met again her dear friend Nevile Sherbrooke, whom she had first known, when, as a young

¹ The Right Rev. Alfred Tucker, the first Bishop of Uganda, and afterwards Canon of Durham, a talented Artist, and for many years a devoted Missionary. He was full of energy in the service of his Heavenly Master, until his sudden death in June, 1914.

and remarkably good-looking Captain in the 43rd Light Infantry, he had become a devoted soldier of Christ. Later on, when he had been ordained in the Church of England, she rejoiced in his steadfast adherence to Evangelical faith and practice, through all the years of his ministry. Now he was bearing with patient courage the heavy trial which cut him off from all active work for his Lord and Master. On October 2nd, 1916, he entered into the joy of his Lord.

One of the greatest interests connected with this time, and continued every year until the last, was that her hostesses invited the undergraduate guests at the Oxford and Cambridge Houses to come to tea at the Derwentwater Hotel, to give them the opportunity of hearing an address from her, who for so many years had carried on her Greatheart work of helping pilgrims. Now, in her old age, and generally resting on her sofa, she could yet tell in her rich musical tones, the same good words she had ever loved to speak—the message of Divine Love, which though old as Eternity, is yet new as each morning's dawn. The young men's earnest faces were turned to her in reverent attention as they listened to the address and prayer, with perfect stillness, fearing to lose a word. Then each in turn grasped her hand and had a farewell word of blessing.

In yet another year, Mrs. Garnett, the great friend of the Navy Mission, who had brought several of the Navy Missionaries to the Convention, asked if she might bring them to see her. They were made very welcome. In describing the visit Mrs. Garnett wrote: "The lovely old saint shook hands with each, and gave us a little address from her very heart on 'the great love of Christ to us *all*, to us *each*—to the dear navvies, to the Church, nay, no limitations—to the whole world.'"

Among those in whom she took an interest when at Keswick, was a chauffeur, to whom she promised a Bible. He wrote on receiving it:

"Dear Madam,—You cannot imagine how delighted I was

to receive the Holy Bible which you so kindly sent me, and to think you are still thinking of me. The impression that you made on me in our interview at Keswick, will never be forgotten, and I will do my best with the help of the Almighty God to do justice to your prayers. May the Lord reward you for the good you do to so many poor sinners."

The servants of the hotel were not forgotten by her. During her last visit she diligently sought the soul of the waiter who carried up her meals to the sitting-room, never failing to speak a few earnest words to him each time he came into the room, and before she left she had the joy of knowing that he had decided to give himself to Christ.

For January 1st, 1891, she sent a printed letter to her friends, that her new sight might not be over-strained by writing to each. Some of those who had it, showed it to their friends, and many wished for copies, but there were none to be had. So it was published as a very small book called *Onward and Upward*, and from this time she wrote a little book for each New Year. Her friends and acquaintances, old and new, welcomed this small annual with growing interest. The envelopes in which she sent them were addressed for her by willing helpers, but as long as she could possibly do it, she wrote in the book with her own hand, the name and a loving message to each of her special friends. The number sent was about 1500; but each year there were names to be left out, and she often felt that "the sadness of living, is out-living." Still, she never lost the habit of making friends, so the last list numbered above a thousand.

On January 9th, 1891, she had this letter: "Your kind letter came to-day when we were at luncheon. With us was a well-known Canon, who has for many years done a good work for God, and His Church, I asked him if he knew Miss Marsh. He replied: "I was made known to her when a young man at Beckenham Rectory. It was at a crisis of my life and I learnt more from her than from all my other teachers." He would not allow me to mention

his name, he said you would not know it, but I feel I must not withhold from you a fact which will, I am sure, cheer you."

When Parliament was opened in 1891, a new cause for anxiety was revealed. Mr. Gladstone brought in his Bill to enable Roman Catholics to hold the offices of Lord Chancellor of England, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. It was thrown out by the House of Commons on the second reading, Colonel Saunderson's speech, recalling Mr. Gladstone's own views on the subject as set forth in his *Vatican Decrees* helped much in its overthrow.

C. M. to C. F. M. :

"*February 13th.*—Thank you for your delightful letter. It was a tremendous suspense until a telegram from the House of Commons turned our breathless anxiety into a thankful Hallelujah. But the promoters of the Bill will watch their opportunity for any possible chance in another session. We must go on besieging Heaven with prayer, and sowing Protestant seed broadcast over the country. My whole days were occupied in writing to implore for prayer, and much of my nights in pleading with the Lord to answer it. Now, I feel that with all the great anxiety still remaining, we should thank God, and take courage. 'His right Hand, and His holy Arm, hath gotten Him the victory.' That Arm is not weary, still less is it powerless for future battles for the right. But for Him, the way in which Rome is enclosing the net on every side, might drive one to despair. But He must conquer. He must reign, and I long for the day when the whole world will know it."

A dear link with her early life was severed on October 30th, 1891, when her brother-in-law, William Knox Marshall, died. When his long last illness began, both his sons came quickly from India to cheer him with their deep affection; all his daughters were married, but they also came to be with him whenever they could. A good many years after his wife's death, he had married Elizabeth Storer, a friend connected with their Leamington years

and also with Bridgnorth, her mother having been one of the Whitmores of Apley. His second marriage made no change in his friendship with his first wife's family, and his children rejoiced in it, for it gave love and happiness to his old age. His was a steadfast character, he had never swerved from the Evangelical faith, which he had learnt while he was with his beloved father-in-law, but his consistent life, diligence in duty, and charitable nature made him respected, and loved, by many who greatly differed from him. In his different parishes the poor were devoted to him, while his pleasant sense of humour, and well-stored memory, made him a welcome companion everywhere.

Correspondence was still one of the great interests of Catherine Marsh's life. Her morning hours were given to letter-writing, yet she often wrote on till the last possible moment for catching the last post! She used to keep a little packet, on which she wrote "precious letters for my pocket," and there they were kept for days or weeks until another set was ready to take their place, and the selection was as varied as the interests of her life.

In the spring of 1892 Catherine Marsh had this deeply interesting letter from Miss Nightingale, and it is impossible not to wish that the letter to which it is the response, had been forthcoming.

"10, *South Street*, *March 24th*, 1892.—Dearest Miss Marsh,—How can I thank you enough for so kindly writing to me, and how much good your dear letter did me! 'God loves her, and she knows it; and she loves Him'—how God-like are those words. I repeated them to a poor woman who had lost everything by an act of immorality and breach of trust: her good situation, her character, her child; and who wished to destroy herself. And she is now going to a safe situation, where the mistress knows it all, but takes her, and will tell no one, so that she may lead a new life, with her Saviour's help.

"You kindly ask after me. I am a good deal over-worked, but thankful to be permitted to go on at all.

Kindly pray for the Nurses and the Nursing—not only for ours but for *all*. There comes sometimes a crisis in our lives which can only, I was going to say, be tided over by the help of God, as if that were not always our only main-stay—I mean of course where a double measure of His Spirit is needed; the Comforter who was promised on the eve of the Crucifixion to teach us what is wrong and what is right. *Our* trial is not crucifixion but *fashion*. Nursing has become the fashion, and it brings in all sorts of amateur alloy—and public life instead of inner life—and *registering* instead of *training*—and duty rather loses its meaning of ‘Work of God.’ ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord—be it unto me according to Thy word.’ Pray that to-morrow may be really this. On the other hand, an extra mercantile spirit has come in of forcing up wages, regardless of providing a life, a ‘home,’ in the meaning that *home* ought to bear of ‘constant supply’ and ‘constant sympathy’—regardless that Hospital and Workhouse Nursing has been raised from the sink it was—not more by training than by making the Hospital and District Home a place where no good mother of any class need fear to send her daughter—a place of moral safe-guards, good and kind supervision, good companions, of inspiring help, of good food and lodging, and decency and discipline.

“But I did not mean when I began writing to you, dear friend, to enlarge upon Nursing, upon the influence which a Nurse ought to exert on the (far better educated than formerly) men patients, spying out whether she is acting up to her profession. But your kindness and the desire to have your prayers for grace to Him Who is always smiling on us if we do not willingly grieve Him and leading us back if we do, has made me go on to you. I am so sorry for your great trial of blindness. I find your little books such a great help to lives. I find even uneducated people so anxious to know whether ‘that Beckenham’ is where ‘the lady lived who wrote *Light for the Line*,’ or—or—— May I send my deep regard to Mrs. Chalmers and to all yours and be ever yours most sincerely,
FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.”

In April Catherine Marsh heard with great pleasure that Mr. Froude had been offered the Professorship of History at the University of Oxford. She wrote to congratulate him, and sent him a large print New Testament asking him to take it to be his companion there. The next letter is his reply :

“ *April 18th, 1892.*—My dear Miss Marsh,—How good you are to me ! Your benediction and your present will both be my helpers in this vast enterprise which I have undertaken in my old days. I do not know how it will be for they want to force me into the dray cart to pull on their lines and at their own routine work, and I intend, if I go, to lecture for a year on the Reformation, otherwise I will not go at all. Whether I go or not it is delightful to me to feel that I am remembered in your thoughts and in your prayers.—Yours ever affectionately, J. A. FROUDE.”

When Parliament was opened in 1892, it soon became clear that there was danger that the Home Rule Bill would be forced through, and when the third reading had been passed, and the session drew to its close with the prospect of a dissolution, it was evident that the great demonstration proposed to be held in Ulster would be necessary, in order that the Imperial Parliament and the electors of the United Kingdom might be warned of the inevitable result, should the attempt be made to enforce this act of tyranny.

Catherine Marsh redoubled her efforts to warn all whom she could reach, of the danger threatening, and to strengthen the hands of those who were preparing to fight the battle for freedom and for faith.

There was a splendid protest against the Bill in a letter to *The Times* by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, a great leader in the Liberal Party, and on May 17th she wrote to him :

“ Your country will ever bless you for the strong arm you have stretched forth to save her—when one foot was over the precipice, and she was walking in her sleep. It was the clarion sound of that letter in *The Times* of the 8th which waked up England, and more especially her repre-

sentatives—to see the danger, just before it was too late. God forever bless you for your stedfast stand to save Ireland, and with it the British Empire.”

Again she sent forth a warning, and an appeal for prayer, “on the brink of a crisis.”

With the eloquence that comes from the heart, she pleaded with the electors :

“Is it possible that England, the country of our pride, and her noble sister Scotland, can have sunk so low as to consent to sanction that threat of the promoters of Home Rule that *their* bayonets shall be employed to enforce that yoke? The men of Ulster might die in vain for their homes, their faith, their liberties; but what could ever wipe away the stain from England’s story? The men of Ulster and the Protestants scattered throughout Ireland, will rather shed the last drop of their hearts’ blood in fighting to retain their freedom to worship God according to their conscience, than live as slaves in Papal bondage. If Home Rulers are returned to Parliament, though they may be kindly and generous in their personal characters, yet, blinded by political aims and party feelings they are contemplating the committal of so monstrous a wrong. This danger demands instant prayer.”

She signed the appeal “Credo,” her faith was strong.

Mr. Froude wrote :

“*June 17th, 1892.*—My dear Miss Marsh,—You are at the front as usual when the enemy is to be encountered. I hope the electors will lay ‘the Brink of the Crisis’ to mind, but whether they do or not, the unholy alliance between Radicals and Roman Catholics cannot succeed in the end. We have perhaps a stormy twenty years before us and you and I may not see the end, good things and good people may fall in the contest, but I will not believe that the victory won at the Reformation is now to be flung away. There are sorceries in politics as in other things, but the sorcerer usually terminates on the gallows, and the world is then cured of its follies, at least for a generation or two.

“My own small share of the business has not yet begun.

I enter on my duties next October and mean to give a series of lectures on the Council of Trent—a congregation of rogues if rogues there ever were—on their own showing. So far as I can see Oxford is prepared to listen to me civilly, and if I lose my chance it will be by my own fault. The worst is that my time is short (I am 74). I have to address classes of students, and influence can only be gained on them slowly. Happily in these great issues the success or failure of small individuals like me matters nothing one way or the other. I am charmed to see that your handwriting is so firm and clear, and like what it used to be. May you still have many years of peace and usefulness before you.—Yours ever most heartily, J. A. FROUDE.”

Mr. H. O. Arnold-Forster went over to Belfast and from thence wrote a striking letter to *The Times* on June 13th, and the following extract is from the closing sentence : “What is the crime of Ulster? What law has Ulster broken? Ulster has but one crime, that of being too loyal to England, and to the Constitution which it helped to create. This policy which the Gladstonians have stooped to pick up from Mr. Healy and Mr. O’Brien, I cannot but believe will prove as grave an error in policy, as it is undoubtedly an offence against the code of loyalty and honour.”

A letter Catherine Marsh had sent to *The Record* with her signature “Credo,” was reprinted and circulated widely. In it she wrote :

“We are standing on the brink where two wild seas threaten to meet—civil war in Ireland on one hand, and the disintegration of the British Empire on the other. Nothing less than a Hand stretched out from Heaven can save us.

“On the night when the Home Rule Bill of 1886 was overthrown in the House of Commons, prayer was being poured forth in Ireland and in England, until on the wings of the morning was borne the glad tidings that the Hearer of Prayer had vouchsafed the immediate answer. The men in Belfast (who had passed that night without going to rest), when the glad tidings came—that the House of

Commons had saved them from being given over into the hands of the enemies of their Faith and their freedom, fell on their knees and thanked God for His great deliverance. Shall we doubt that He will answer *now* the prayers of millions?"

The Ulster Convention was held in Belfast on June 17th, 1892, and was attended by 20,000 people, of whom about 12,000 were delegates. This was no noisy popular meeting, it began with prayer by the Primate, and the reading of some verses from the 46th Psalm. The speakers and the hearers were desperately in earnest, and enthusiastic in their great cause.

The Duke of Abercorn presided, and in the opening address said: "We must remember there are thousands of loyalists, Roman Catholics and Protestants, who live in the other three Provinces, men of like feelings and sympathies to our own, who are watching us with the deepest interest in the great danger, the loss of civil and religious liberty, that threatens us all." Then at the close he said: "I see before me stubborn Tories, and sturdy Radicals side by side, on this burning vital question you are all united, for it concerns Home, liberty, everything that makes life dear, everything that makes life worth living."

Wide-spread sympathy for, and with, them was felt in all parts of the United Kingdom, in the Colonies, and in America, and shown in 175 telegrams which were sent to the Convention. A thousand Oxford students telegraphed their wish for "a triumphant success." John Bright's townsmen sent "heart-felt sympathy in the present danger," the Liberal Unionist Association of Inverness-shire said: "We tender our uncompromising support to Ulster in this great crisis," and the others were all to the same purport.

The impression made by the Convention is told in *The Times* of June 18th: "In no doubtful or faltering accents the men of Protestant Ulster placed on record yesterday their solemn and unalterable resolution not to recognize or submit to the schemes of politicians who, under the seductive name of Home Rule, would impose upon them

a hateful tyranny such as their fathers fought against to the death in 1689. No political demonstration in our time afforded any parallel to the vast representative gathering which met at Belfast to give utterance to the pent-up feelings of Ulstermen. They have been long silent, and slow to move, but they have spoken at last so that no one can pretend to misunderstand them. The delusion that the resistance to Home Rule in Ulster is merely an Orange movement must be finally dispelled by the proceedings of yesterday. A sense of common danger has induced men of different parties to abate their rivalries, and recognize each other's merits. The right of citizenship under the Imperial Government is the inheritance of Ulster men. They prize it highly. They refuse to part with it."

The Unionists in England shared in the rejoicing, and the next letter tells of one way in which the news had been received in London.

L. M. C. A. to C. M. :

"*June 23rd.*—My precious Marny,—Would that you could have been with us last night. It was a splendid meeting, the large audience at the highest pitch of enthusiastic attention, catching every point, and greeting the Ulster men, and the Duke of Argyll, and Lord Londonderry with quite extraordinary warmth and cheering."

The next letter made her very thankful.

"*Belfast, July 1st, 1892.*—Dear Madam,—All who know of it express deep gratitude to you for your kind sympathy extended so generously to the Protestants of Ulster in this eventful crisis of their history. On our own behalf allow us to thank you sincerely. Your 'Credo' letters we have read with much interest, and are distributing them. We cannot know *how much* of the success of our Convention, but we hope and believe a great deal, was due to the sympathy and prayers of good friends so kindly interested in our cause. In the event of a still graver crisis arising, the spirit of the Convention will be carried out to its settlement. None here are for a party, all are for the State.—We have the honour to remain with much esteem, very respectfully, ULSTER TEXTILE COMPANY."

On September 8th the Home Rule Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords, and shortly afterwards Parliament adjourned.

The fervent prayers for the deliverance of Ulster had been answered, and great was the thankfulness; yet the return of Mr. Gladstone to power, with a majority of forty-two, could not fail to bring disquieting thoughts.

Lord Northbrook to C. M.:

"*July 22nd, 1892.*—I am entirely with you in your praise of the Ulster Convention and your trust that Ulster will never be put under the heel of the Nationalists. Mr. Gladstone's majority does not seem to me to be sufficient to enable him to pass a Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons, but the future will require careful handling from the Unionist chiefs."

It will be clearly seen by the letter which follows, that the Protestants of Ulster were not on their defence against an imaginary danger, but that there was good reason for their fears. On December 24th there was this remarkable letter in *The Times*, from George Hanson, D.D., Duncairn Presbyterian Church, Belfast, who described himself as "a Liberal, in accord with almost all the Liberal policy," but "not convinced of the wisdom of Home Rule for Ireland," and he appealed to his Nonconformist brethren in England and Scotland to consider what it meant to the Ulster Protestants with their dread of Popish ascendancy and intolerance. He forestalled the probable answer that there would be no danger of the domination of Rome, by the question: "Are you sure?" and answered it by recounting what had lately happened in Belfast, in these words: "A Roman Catholic priest persuaded a Roman Catholic man who had married a Presbyterian wife in a Presbyterian Church that according to the Papal Bull *Ne temere*, the marriage so celebrated was both sinful and invalid. The husband, acting on the priest's advice, basely repudiated his wife, took her children, one an infant of a few months, from her, and disappeared with them, leaving no trace. The woman has been left husbandless, childless, homeless, and penniless. The police cannot, or will not,

the priest could, but will not, help her to find her children and husband. She can obtain no legal redress. She cannot get a writ for maintenance served upon her husband, for the priests have him in hiding and will not produce him. The Romish authorities can spirit away a husband and children from a lawful wife, and loving mother, and snap their fingers in the face of the magistrates and officers of the law. When your Ulster Protestants see the decrees of the Vatican over-riding in this daring fashion the laws of the King, when he sees a priest, in the name of religion, capable of such brutality and cowardice, do you marvel if he says to himself, 'If these things are done in the green tree, what will be done in the dry?' Are his fears wholly groundless?"

Again the New Year opens with a letter from Mr. Froude. "January 5th, 1893.—My dear Miss Marsh,—The sight of your hand-writing is always like a gleam of Spring sunshine. In this Arctic weather it is actually warming. It shews moreover as I am delighted to observe that your eyesight is strong again; every stroke is firm and clear. As your bodily eyes are, so are the eyes of your mind, and that is something to be thankful for, when the spiritual dust is flying thick enough to blind us all.

"I wonder whether you will ever come to see us at Oxford; we go back in a fortnight. Last term I began a course of lectures on the Council of Trent. You would have been pleased to see the crowds of young men who regularly attended and the eagerness with which they listened. I must go on with it when term begins again. We have been all together here for Christmas. Mary left me two days ago to pay visits. Ashley returns to-morrow to his work in London, and Margaret and I will then be alone for a fortnight, after which we must go back to the University. What I should like would be that you should come to us at Commemoration, when distinguished people are made into *Doctors*. You should yourself figure in the list. Why not in these days of emancipation? We have plenty of emancipated ladies in Oxford I assure you.

I wish you could give them a piece of your mind.—Yours ever affectionately, J. A. FROUDE.”

The second Home Rule Bill was brought forward in the House of Commons on February 13th, and when the second reading was about to come on, Catherine Marsh, in the intensity of her anxiety, determined to make an appeal to Mr. Gladstone :

“*Feltwell Rectory, April 18th, 1893.*—Dear Mr. Gladstone, —Will you bear with an old and grateful friend whilst she writes a few words to you from the depth of a heart which has poured forth prayer to God for you for seven and twenty years past? I cannot bear that your name, so idolized throughout the Empire—should have the stain of causing bloodshed upon it—and the horror of Civil War. *That* will come—if the Home Rule Bill passes, and is carried into effect. Oh how grand it would be if you would go down to the House, and say that on further consideration you felt it better to withdraw it. You would have the whole Empire at your feet, and the fervent gratitude, I believe, of the majority of the Irish Nation—certainly of all those who are peaceably disposed, and not wishing to make a prey of their neighbours. I do so want your name to be ever remembered with blessings—do not, oh do not—bring down the reverse.

“And far above all this I beg and pray and plead for you to have grace given you only to use your magnificent genius—your unequalled influence, for the will and pleasure of the King Eternal, your ‘Master and only Saviour.’ Please let me *entreat* you, to take an hour alone with Him—and to say to Him, what He said to His Father—in the garden of Gethsemane—‘Not my will—but *Thine* be done.’ Ever dear Mr. Gladstone, yours very gratefully, CATHERINE MARSH.”

Mr. Gladstone’s answer has not been found. Catherine Marsh wrote again, but her letter, to which the next is the answer, concludes with these words: “Please let this letter be between you and me and our God, alone.” Therefore, though it is what all the world might read, it could not be published.

Mr. Gladstone to C. M.:

"10, *Downing Street*, April 21st, 1893.—Dear Miss Marsh, —You will hardly expect from me the adoption of the form in which your prayers are clothed by your wishes. But I assure you that those prayers are valued by me and I sincerely hope, and humbly ask that you will continue them. Believe me sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE."

The Home Rule Bill was read a second time on the day this letter was written.

There was no slackening of her efforts, no lessening of her fervour in prayer, and she kept in touch with the Protestants of Ulster by corresponding with the heads of some of the great commercial houses in Belfast. The next letter is from one of these.

"I beg to thank you for your continued interest in the great cause of Ulster, which is the cause of Protestantism, and of civil and religious liberty not only in Ireland but all over the Empire; for if England crushes the people of Ulster it will be only another step towards enslaving Great Britain, and dragging our great country's flag in the dirt of the chariot wheels of Rome. But British statesmen do not see it, and they appear wilfully deaf to all attempts that Ulster makes to enlighten them."

On September 3rd the Home Rule Bill was read for the third time; and by the 8th it had reached the second reading in the House of Lords, when it was thrown out by a majority of 419 to 41.

There were some who ventured to hope that it had received a fatal blow; but at all events there was a respite, which was received with great thankfulness by the Protestants, in Ireland, most of whom felt, as did Catherine Marsh, that it came as the answer to much prayer.

Now a deep anxiety began to fill Catherine Marsh's heart. For more than a year Sir Arthur Blackwood's health had been in a precarious state. On Christmas Day, 1892, she had written to Lady Kintore:¹ "I am very

¹ Lady Sydney Montagu, Sir Arthur Blackwood's stepdaughter, had married Lord Inverurie, Lady Kintore's eldest son.

uneasy about dearest Stevie ; a word of his took me to him at Shooter's Hill. I had written I feared it was not possible for me to go there, and in answer came this postcard : ' Then I fear we shall never meet *till*——' (there was no more added). That 'till' took me to him for the very next Sunday. It would have taken me down the middle of the North Pole, through the fire in the middle of the world and out at the South Pole ! God of His mercy spare that beautiful blessed life, and give him restored health for his work for the country, and for his God. Through his influence a Post-Office prayer-meeting and prayer union has been established in every town in England, in not a few in Scotland, and in some places in Ireland. That alone was worth living for."

She has written of this visit : " Then it was that he said to me in answer to my earnest enquiry, ' What do you feel in looking forward ? ' and he replied ' What do I feel ? an absolute confidence in the love of God. And an absolute certainty of being one with Christ, and Christ with me.' "

In the spring he made a rally, and hopes were raised of his recovery, and with this hope he was sent to Campfer. But there his illness increased. His spirit had been strong to live, yet when he knew the truth about his state, he said to the nurse, " I have had glorious news to-day. I am to die." He was just able to live through the journey, and died a few hours after his landing in England, on October 2nd, 1893.

Catherine Marsh wrote again to Lady Kintore :

" ' With Christ which is far better '—is all we can say now, and we do say it with all our hearts. But life must be duller without that breezy daring spirit—that child-like simplicity and humility—that warm and tender heart—that life of hard work and self-denial. However there will be plenty of scope for it all in Heaven, and plenty of time for us all to enjoy it again."

Later on, when she was writing to Lord Polwarth, she told him :

" I have been reading over old letters of Sir Arthur Blackwood's, and it has made me feel the more, the

pricelessness of his friendship for Eternity. He was, and is, and ever will be, the most delightful combination of Apostle, hero, and Eton boy-at-home-for-the-holidays that I have ever known. And how charming are those youthful spirits *now*, amongst Saints and Angels, and all the Company of Heaven. And with what holy reverence he enjoys the sunshine and the glory of the Lord and Saviour's countenance, and the Majesty of His Divine and Human Presence."

A little renewing of her first great interest is told of in this letter:

Lady Burdett-Coutts to C. M.:

"*February 20th, 1893.*—Dearest and kindest Friend,—Your delightful reminiscence of your great book came safely to hand, and photo. Your much loved and venerated Father's likeness is in Stratton Street where I return to-morrow—very anxious and occupied in my Chicago work now closing up, to which you have added a grace and nobility I could not have obtained elsewhere.¹

"This is indeed a crucial moment in the History of our country, and it awakes many, and strengthens others to feel that there are those like yourself so keenly alive to its moment, and giving the country's welfare their earnest prayers, in the calm quiet not to be obtained in every day's work."

Early in March, 1894, Mr. Gladstone retired from Office. His health was failing and his sight decreasing. To Catherine Marsh's letter of sympathy in his blindness, he replied:

"*Dollis Hill, April 30th.*—Dear Miss Marsh,—I thank you for your very kind letter. It found me an invalid, a character which I have mostly borne for the last two months, from which I am now escaping, but which gives so much opportunity for appreciating the goodness of God and for drawing near to Him. I am also, or ought to be, most thankful for His goodness in relieving me from

¹ Lady Burdett-Coutts had asked Miss Marsh to give her a short sketch of her friendship with the Navvies, for the book on "Woman's Work" which she was editing for the Chicago Exhibition.

the life of contention with my fellow-creatures in which I had been engaged for nearly 62 years. My advisers are most sanguine about my cataract. I trust you are now free from all inconveniences. If I regain the use of the eye it will be a new and great mercy. The day is not yet fixed but I hope it will be towards the close of the month that opens to-morrow.—Heartily wishing you every blessing, I remain, sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.”

C. M. to Mr. Gladstone :

“ *Feltwell Rectory, May 20th, 1894.*—It is such a strength and comfort to remember the Saviour’s peculiar tenderness to the blind. I think I mentioned to you how my sister and I *rested* on the delightful discovery that He had Himself added to the prophecy of what He came down to earth to do—‘recovery of sight to the blind.’ It was His utterly human sympathy, linked to His Divine power, and the certainty that He was in the room with me, made it *almost* a happy time.”

One of the friendships begun in her later life, was with Dr. Goulburn, Dean of Norwich, and they kept up a correspondence on many subjects, religious, political, and literary—that gave much pleasure to both of them. A short extract from one of Dean Goulburn’s letters follows next. He had sent her his *Life of Dean Burgon*.

“ *June 7th, 1894.*—I am quite pleased to receive your kind and valued sentence of approval upon my *Burgon*. The work was a great interest to me. His profound deference for God’s written word was, I think, the most striking feature in his spiritual character, and his playful love for young children in his natural character.

“The out-look is very black, as far as we can judge,—both in Church and State—Disestablishment, and Disendowment at the very doors, and Disintegration of Empire impending, and only suspended for the present by the action of the House of Lords. We know however that believing prayer can work wonders, and it is quite possible that many of the dismal effects which we forebode may be averted by this force in the spiritual world. What a

blessed and happy exodus for our dear Bishop Pelham. No suffering, all pain of parting with the children he so fondly loved, spared him—and he himself with all Christian graces matured within him, taken to the blessed ‘Sabbath-keeping which remaineth for the people of God,’ ‘like a shock of corn cometh in his season.’”

In a note written about this time by Miss Coventry, the head of the Mildmay Deaconesses’ House, to whom Catherine Marsh had written asking if a Deaconess she had heard of could be spared to be the head of her Blackrock Convalescent Home, there is a sidelight on another characteristic of hers :

Miss Coventry replied : “How I wish every one would be as straight as you are, it would save so much time, tension, trial and turmoil, with additional t’s *ad lib!*” After explaining why the Deaconess wished for could not be sent, the letter ended thus, “but doubtless there is the right one in readiness for you.” And so it was, for almost immediately afterwards she heard of one, Miss Marian Medland, who had been an efficient and devoted Superintendent of the Home and whose spiritual and temporal work for the good of the patients was always a source of great thankfulness to her.

This autumn was a happy time. Catherine Marsh took Balmacara House on Loch Alsh, and had a large family party there. Her love of, and delight in the rare beauty and charm of the Western Highlands never diminished. She had friends in the neighbourhood new and old—but beyond all the other interests her great and thankful happiness was in seeing the work of God’s grace growing and deepening in the Master of Blantyre, who came, whenever his busy life allowed, to see her at Balmacara or to take her in his yacht to Eilanreach, and he diligently sought her help in his spiritual life by always asking her to read the Bible, and to pray with him whenever they met.

On September 24th she wrote to Lucy O’Rorke from Inverary :

“Lulu and I are safely here after a ten-hours’ journey; the drive past Loch Awe looked too lovely to-day. Such

a kindest welcome from the Duke and all the children, and he is such delightful company.

"I have just heard that dear Mr. Froude is ill; do ask for power from on High to go with all I write and send to him."

Soon after her return from Scotland she had to face the sad prospect of losing her friend James Anthony Froude. Those who knew him will remember his interesting personality, his striking face, and his wonderful eyes. His wife, when describing him, said, "A lamp burns behind Anthony's eyes;" a true description for they glowed or darkened, or flashed and sparkled, according to the mood in which he spoke.

When his dying illness began his youngest daughter wrote to Catherine Marsh to ask her to write to her father as often as she could, for, she said, "he is greatly comforted by your letters."

After hearing of his death, she wrote to Louisa Anstruther, October, 1894.

"Oh yes, I do believe that Anthony Froude is with his Saviour, because we have a faithful God. As long as the Holy Ghost is *one* with the Father, and the Son—and as long as he makes a heart-cry in any soul, for the salvation of another soul,—I cannot see how that heart-cry could be left unanswered. And you know that delightful man *did* write to me not so very long ago, that his faith was much nearer mine now, than I knew. And we know—one look, one call, is salvation. 'Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.' I have no doubt the Holy Spirit taught him blessed things about the Lord Jesus, when he was unconscious of anything around him, and perhaps long before. So I give thanks and praise for him, to our faithful God."

The year closes with this letter to Mr. Gladstone:

"*December 31st, 1894.*—Dear Mr. Gladstone,—Fervently did I pray for the recovery of your sight—and earnestly have I thanked for the complete answer to those prayers, in connection I doubt not with the prayers of thousands.

"This passing year has carried away some for whom

I had long been praying that they might be led out of the mazes of doubt and unbelief, and some from carelessness and sin. One of the former, (not Mr. Froude) but another man, of high integrity, and great benevolence—in the course of a long and painful illness, listened earnestly to the world-wide invitations of our glorious Gospel, and also to the hymns which tell the same story of peace—hymns which I know you love: ‘Jesus, Refuge of my soul,’ or ‘Rock of Ages, cleft for me.’

“He died saying ‘God have mercy on me for Jesus Christ’s sake.’ We thought of the words—and we took heart to give thanks for him—‘Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved.’ And oh what millions may,—I believe *do*—get the golden gates opened by a dying prayer like the dying thief’s—or by a dying look, to Him Who bore the sins of the whole world ‘in His own Body on the tree,’ and said ‘look unto Me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth.’ What a full Heaven we shall find, to fulfil these words, the most delightful of promises: ‘He shall see of the travail of His soul, *and shall be satisfied.*’ It will need multitudes, ‘multitudes from every nation and tongue, and kindred and people,’ to do *that* for Him—will it not? And how His neighbours and His friends, the Angels and Saints, will rejoice with Him.

“May I send you and Mrs. Gladstone my little New Year’s letter—with my warm best wishes for both for the New Year.—Ever, dear Mr. Gladstone, Yours most sincerely and gratefully, CATHERINE MARSH.”

About this time she had the following letter from Mrs. Vaughan, wife of the Dean of Llandaff:

“Dear sweet venerated Friend,—We both of us revere and love you, and from both of us you must accept the dearest remembrance that one human friend can send to another. We have both of us so often said there is no one we should *love* so much to have with us at the last, as dear Miss Marsh.”

1895 began in gloom in England. George Holland, well-called “the Apostle of Whitechapel,” where for the



Yours ever affectionately
Catherine Marsh



best part of his life he laboured heart and soul for the poorest of the poor, was often helped by Catherine Marsh, and greatly valued by her. In thanking her for a gift for the half-starved ones, he wrote :

“The distress seems greater than last year’s. No trade, no employment to be had. I am afraid the strikers have driven away the trade, we have thousands of foreigners here, and the work is lost to our people.”

Heavy snow-storms, and prolonged hard frosts, added to the troubles of this winter, and in the midst of this dreary weather Colonel Lionel and Lady Constance Fawkes came to pay a visit at Feltwell Rectory. Then it was that Colonel Fawkes drew the portrait of Catherine Marsh in her old age. The extreme cold of the season accounts for the warm shawl in which she was wrapped.

Afterwards Colonel Fawkes wrote to her :

“I was giving myself great pleasure in drawing such a subject as you afforded me. I cannot tell you how privileged I feel in having had that nice time at Feltwell *and the sitting*. It will interest you to hear that I took the sketch to shew old Mr. Richmond. He is nearly 86, and I feared he could not see it, but he could, and was so pleased with it. I have had the best lessons in my life from his criticisms.”

The stormy weather continued, there were fearful gales, and great loss of life at sea. Catherine Marsh knew that the Master of Blantyre was rejoicing in the completion of a large steam yacht, as a means by which he could take food and fuel to the suffering cottagers and crofters who had no other way by which to get it. He made two successful voyages between Glasgow and Glenelg, but on the third they encountered a terrible storm; in his night-watch he caught a chill that had fatal effects, and in the prime of his manhood he died on March 15th. So another of her sons in the faith passed on before her.

At the earnest request of Lord Blantyre and his family, she wrote a short sketch of his life. A great effort, but she did it with all her heart, much to their comfort.

Lord Northbrook to C. M. :

" I met the Master of Blantyre once at Dunrobin, when he had a large farm, on part of the Duke of Sutherland's reclamations, and he seemed a most remarkable man, with his great good looks and position, living the hardest life of a Highland farmer, with hardly any other company than his deer hounds. I had no idea of the deeper side of his character till I read your little book."

Part of that autumn was spent at Eilanreach. She shrank from this; but she consented, when Lord Blantyre asked that for his son's sake she would go there for the last opportunity of carrying on the work he had begun, before the estate passed into other hands.

On August 2nd she wrote to her sister :

" We reached Eilanreach this evening. The pain of coming here is worse than I feared—in the missing of his bright smile of welcome, his cheery voice and presence, and his many ways of shewing his gladness and affection, was almost too sad. But when I saw the tears of his men who came to welcome us, and felt the fervent grasp of their strong hands, I trusted that God had brought me here for His Messages of love and peace to enter those sorrowing hearts."

Louisa Anstruther came to join the family party for a short time, and after she left Catherine Marsh wrote to her :

" Your sketch of Eilanreach is quite a treasure to me, though a *sad joy*. As I sit at my window I see the glittering waters, where the tide and the river have met, and the sun is pouring down orange light, and the mountains in Skye are a deep purple, and I long for you to see it. We are having enchanting weather, everything looks as radiant as on that last Sunday we were with the Master here."

At Eilanreach she welcomed, on their arrival from India, George Marshall, and his lovely wife, a daughter of Sir William Muir, Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Provinces.

To her sister she wrote : " We have had a most happy time with our Georgie and Bessie ; they are quite delightful.

" Every evening one or two of the shepherds come, and

their wives come when they can, and I would not have missed these weeks for any whole year I could have now."

There was a full room for her Sunday night meeting. On the day before she left, a stream of people came for last words of help, and late that evening she met the keepers and shepherds in the Master's smoking-room, for her farewell words at Eilanreach.

It was in this year that, for the last time, she spoke in any public place. The Vicar¹ of Kensington and his wife, who both were dear friends of hers, as their parents were before them, asked her to give her help at a meeting for the Navy Mission to be held in his parish room. The cause was so dear to her that she could not refuse. There were other speakers, one was Dr. Creighton, then Bishop of Peterborough, afterwards of London. Mr. Glyn wrote to her: "We thank you again and again with our best love for your delightful helpful words, I am sure they went *home*."

She still kept up her ministry for souls, by her letters. A friend of former years wrote to her when doubts and fears troubled her mind in the prospect of death; and her answer, from which the following is an extract, dispelled the doubts, and calmed the fears.

"If I could only write one sentence, I think it should be 'He is faithful that promised.' Promised, 'Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.'

"On the assurance that 'The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin,' would I alone rest my hope, even if I had the holiness of the greatest saint, nay the holiness of all the saints put together. On that precious Blood, would I still rest my hope, even if I had the guilt of the greatest sinner, nay the guilt of all the sinners in the world put together. You see, beloved friend, the Lord Jesus Christ is the very soul of honour. He could not hold out a false hope, for He is the Truth."

¹ The Rev. the Hon. Edward Carr Glyn. He married Lady Mary Campbell, sixth daughter of the eighth Duke of Argyll, and was subsequently Bishop of Peterborough.

A letter from the Hon. Mrs. Paley, Lord Rayleigh's only daughter, on January 15th, 1895, shows the unchanging steadfast faith she found in Catherine Marsh.

"It was such a pleasure to see you. You don't seem to change a bit, in looks, or in anything else. . . . I like so much to hear you tell how sufficient for your old age you have found the love of Christ to be. He has never failed you. In these days of doubt, and weak faith, the experience of Christians is almost the strongest testimony and evidence of Christianity that can be given to others, they may think you to be mistaken about a doctrine; but your own experience is a real thing that cannot be easily explained away."

Love was showered on her, and she loved being loved.

C. F. M. to C. M. :

"*March 13th, 1895.*—My own Marny of 59 years' faithful love ! For it will be really 59 years this summer since you came in a group to Park Place and brought new life and merriment to the hearts of young Cary and Jane, and it all comes back like yesterday as I read your dear birthday words of blessing. I could very nearly cry to see your beautiful old hand-writing so changed, but the love behind it is not changed, and it is not less, but more precious, for being what it is."

Lady Kintore to C. M. after hearing she was ill :

"How many lives will seem empty when you are no longer with them—the centre round which they revolve—gone. You have Eternity of bliss before you, so do be willing to stay awhile in a world that greatly needs you."

Many such-like words and outpours of affection were constantly found in the letters that daily gave her pleasure.

Her interest in public affairs was unabated, and now her mind was filled with horror and indignation on hearing of the massacre of the Armenians by the Turks. In December, 1895, she wrote to her sister :

"Oh may our God teach Lord Salisbury what England ought to do about the Armenians, and the Kaffirs. To-day in Church, Henry prayed fervently for those *poor* Armenians

—God of His pitying mercy deliver them from their persecutors. I suppose it is not possible for England to separate from the other five Powers, and deal single-handed with the Sultan of Turkey—but how thankful we should be to hear of the first shot fired into that wicked man's Palace, in so righteous a cause. God would protect the defenders of those poor persecuted creatures.”

With the approach of this winter a new source of great anxiety occupied the Government, for war with America was threatening in the matter of Venezuela. Catherine Marsh had too many personal friendships with Americans, and took far too great an interest in the Christian work carried on by that wonderful nation, not to be filled with intense dread, when the danger seemed imminent. While the feeling excited in America was at its height, at the meeting of the Senate, the Chaplain, the Rev. W. A. Milburn, ventured to pray for peace.

C. M. to M. C. :

“*December 22nd*, 1895.—Oh what mercy is preparing the answer to our cry to God for a different state of feeling in America—my heart and soul are full of loving admiration for the brave blind chaplain to whom I am writing to bless him for his righteous prayer. It is easy for the Lord to say ‘Peace, be still,’ and a great calm shall follow.”

C. M. to the Rev. W. A. Milburn :

“*Christmas Day*, 1895.—Rev'd. and dear Sir,—May I be permitted in the name of my fellow country women to thank and bless you for the faithful courage of your prayer at the opening of the Senate, a prayer which thrilled the heart of England.

“On this birthday of the Prince of Peace, into this poor earth ‘Crimson with battles, and hollow with graves,’—when the Angels were sent from Heaven with the message, ‘on earth peace, good-will towards men,’ God of His mercy grant that all thoughts of discord may cease, so that nothing so terrible as war between two nations of one blood, one language, and one faith, may ever occur.

“O America, our sister, daughter, friend—let no device of the great foe of humanity, peace, and love, have power

to separate us. Let us stand shoulder to shoulder in the fight for truth and honour, justice and mercy until our King returns to take His great power and reign in righteousness."

The Rev. W. A. Milburn to C. M. :

"*The Cairo, Washington, February 28th, 1896.*—Dear Miss Marsh,—The severe illness of my daughter who, on account of my blindness, is my secretary, prevented an earlier acknowledgement of your most kind letter. The prayer in the Senate of which you speak, was the first voice raised for peace on this side of the water, but under God's blessing it soon called forth such a warm response from the best part of our people, that the wild clamour for war was hushed to silence, for which let us give thanks to Him who rules in the armies of Heaven, and in the affairs of earth. We who love and honour England have been deeply moved by the tokens of good-will and affection which have come to us from the mother-country. God grant that the kindly ties which bind the two nations together may be multiplied a thousand-fold, so that henceforth the possibility of war shall be out of the question. With heartiest thanks, and prayers for your welfare, I am sincerely yours, W. A. MILBURN, Chaplain U.S. Senate."

On January 16th, 1896, Lord Blantyre wrote to Catherine Marsh :

"The recent alarms, Germany in the North, Africa in the South, Japan in the East, and America in the West—indicate changes embracing the world;—events occur so rapidly that we may soon have practical experience of the true meaning of the prophecies."

Catherine Marsh wrote to him :

"*February 23rd.*—The Ashanti Expedition has been filling our thoughts. Oh, may none of our soldiers fall into the hands of those cruel heathen. Did not your heart rejoice with exulting bound, when you read of our having by our gallant Army, after their magnificent march, and capture of Bida, set free 12,000 slaves in one day ! And of the deliverance of the miserable subjects of that fiendish

king of Benin, from his tyrannic cruelty, and from his yet more fiendish heathen priest-directors. *I wish* the King of Righteousness, the Prince of Peace—would come *to-day*."

This spring when she was recovering from an attack of bronchitis, she wrote to the Duke of Argyll, and he replied :

" *February 28th*, 1896.—So sorry to hear of your ailing. Your heart failing is a contradiction in terms ! Whatever else fails, *that* will never fail in you !

" My book on the *Philosophy of Belief* will be out in 3 weeks. There is much in it that you will not care for, you live above it. But some parts I hope you will like, especially the chapters on Hebrew Theology, and then on Christian Theology. As Tennyson says in *In Memoriam*, I have not 'drawn the deepest measure from the chords.' I have tried to avoid *controversy* between different churches.

" As soon as I can I am going to write about those infamous Turks. Their doings are too dreadful and we are responsible in having so long defended them.—Yours affectionately, ARGYLL."

When this year was drawing to its close, the hand of death was upon Caroline Maitland, her friend of a lifetime, and on Matilda Chalmers, her cherished sister, with whom she was now staying.

To Lady Victoria Buxton she wrote :

" Lately it has struck me as quite a new thing,

' New, as if brought from other spheres,
Yet welcome, as well loved for years,'

that this life is *only a passage* more or less lightened, or shadowed, and at the end a transparent door, and on the other side of it, is Home. The passage is shady now to my darling sister, but the Sun of Righteousness lights it up with growing brightness."

To Caroline Maitland she wrote :

" The Lord is saying to you, and to my sweet sister, ' Fear not for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name,' Car, Matilda, ' thou art Mine,' ' when thou passest through the waters *I will be with Thee*.' What

lovely friendship and fellowship are in this promise. I often long to see your beautiful hand-writing again, but soon we shall be at Home, and O my Car what pleasant talks we shall have then."

In the evening of Christmas Day, 1896, Matilda Chalmers passed through "the transparent door," into the Home beyond, and her sister was left the solitary survivor of the loving family. She tells something of what her sister's loss meant to her, in the next letter. It is to Lady Victoria Buxton: ¹

"What a well of sweet and holy sympathy lies deep in your dear heart—and what a fountain from it has flowed into my heart in its sorrow. 'Sorrow,' indeed it *is* with a life-long missing of the love which never failed me from infancy up to this last Christmas Day,—and the missing of her heavenly mind and character and blessed example—past missing—passing sorrow—yet for her—how unutterably she has found it far better to be 'with Christ,' and with her own beloved ones before Him, and the whole company of Heaven. I do try to follow her plan of going up to join them in spirit 2 or 3 times a day, and to fall at His feet, saying 'Now unto Him who has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own Blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.' Then one comes back to this sin-stricken, sorrow laden world, with a heart ache indeed for the *present*, but with glowing thoughts of the *future*."

There is a description of these sisters in a note to Catherine Marsh, when she was staying with Mrs. Chalmers.

"How glad I was to see you both! There is something in your faces so nice, so dear, and unusually attractive, that you brighten and cheer me up for a long time after I have seen you, and it makes me long to be what you are, true servants of Jesus Christ."

Her Convalescent Homes had never ceased to occupy Catherine Marsh's thoughts and prayers. The financial

¹ This dearly loved friend of hers died on August 8th, 1916.

part had been managed by a paid secretary. When his death occurred, and she was inquiring for another, one of her Addiscombe friends, Frank, now Colonel, Cotton, happened to come to see her. He told her that another former cadet, now Colonel Barré Goldie, had retired from the Army, that he was intending to live in Brighton, that he was the very best man to undertake the work, and that he was sure he would do it *freely*, for friendship's sake. He was not mistaken. Colonel Goldie gladly consented. He freely devoted himself and gave invaluable help to the Institution from that time, 1897; Mrs. Goldie's wise counsel in all its concerns, was scarcely less valuable, and they both were a continual help and comfort to her, to the end of her life.

Later, an anxiety arose about Blackrock, for so much of the cliff in front had fallen away, that the house was not deemed safe.

Then a number of her friends, and others who valued her writings and good works, showed their appreciation by providing money to purchase a new house. None could be had in Brighton. But at Worthing there was a large house for sale, named Beachfield, with a garden and field close to the seashore, and this was secured. At Worthing there was a devoted clergyman, the Rev. J. Boswell, ready to be the honorary chaplain, and Mrs. Boswell to be a visitor, skilful doctors to watch over the patients' health, and St. George's Church within easy reach, where the Rev. Stephen Farrow welcomed them to his congregation.

The first instalment of the purchase money was sent for her eighty-third birthday, with an address written by the Lady Superintendent, in which it was recalled that "since Blackrock Convalescent Home was founded it had been the means of recovery of health to more than 19,000 persons. Beyond that great blessing it had also brought them into surroundings of sympathy and Christian influence, with the result that many had found in their short stay there the endless spiritual blessings which would cheer their poor and toiling lives here, with the outlook into their bright and beautiful Hereafter."

She had many letters from her friends about it, and amongst them these kind words from Lord Rowton :

“Let me say how delighted I am that you are to be enabled to purchase Beachfield, which will remain as by no means the least of the many great benefits you have been blessed in being able to confer upon your countrymen.”

Her last visit to Beachfield was just after her eighty-sixth birthday. The large central room was filled with the patients, the staff, and friends to the institution from Worthing and Brighton.

She gave a short address on the two Divine Names, Jesus, our Saviour, Emmanuel, God with us. She told them that “those Names enthroned in the heart, are riches and comfort for life, give perfect peace in death, and will be our joy through eternity.” Then she poured out her heart in prayer for them all, and her farewell to Beachfield was over.

In 1898 Mr. Gladstone's last illness had begun. The deep distress which Catherine Marsh felt at the line he had taken in politics had not made a break in their friendship, frequent were her prayers for him, and constant was her sympathy in his sufferings. She was now in her eightieth year, but her hands were as skilful as ever, so she quickly crocheted an invalid's jacket for him and had the pleasure of receiving this letter from Miss Helen Gladstone :

“*Hawarden, April 21st, 1898.*—Dear Miss Marsh,—I reproach myself for not having written to you before, at my Father's desire, to thank you for several letters, and now for that charming warm jacket. I know it will make you happy to hear that *he wears it daily when sitting up in bed for his breakfast* and it is very comfortable. He is grieved that he is quite unable to write to you himself. He trusts that you and he will meet again when you have both put off these earthly garments, and put on the garment of righteousness (after the manner of Bishop Law, whom he has always much esteemed). Happily the doctors can give much relief to his pain, but he greatly desires release,

in all submission. He cares very, very much to be prayed for. My Mother is wonderfully well, all things considered. Yours sincerely, HELEN GLADSTONE."

There was no diminishing in Catherine Marsh's patriotism. On May 3rd, 1898, she wrote to Louisa Anstruther :

"God in His mercy avert the war that Germany seems planning to bring about. May He grant that no foreign foe may ever land in this country. I have prayed about this so often, and so long, that I may as well *expect* that the Lord of Hosts will keep us safe. Did you see the picture in *Black & White* of the relative strength of the Navies? But we will not trust in that but in our God's Right Hand and His Holy Arm."

This autumn, while Catherine Marsh was staying with her friends Lord and Lady Polwarth, at Mertoun, one of the camps for Public School boys was being held in the park.

C. M. to L. M. C. A. :

"Last night there arrived Major Pelham Burn to take command of the Camp, and five young University men, his staff of officers. The bugle from the Camp blowing 'Reveill  ' reminded me of past days, and through the open window, the sound of youthful voices singing 'Rock of Ages' came to me through the trees, over the Tweed."

Later she wrote : "The Camp is taken down save one tent where six young officers are left washing up dishes and clearing away ! It has been most delightful, now I would like to be a camp follower every year ! The capital way in which those young men have become boys again with the boys in their games and their pleasures, and then have sought their souls, and by God's grace have won many—is past words. And oh the joy of giving a helping hand, by God's goodness. Yesterday I had a talk alone with 7 or 8 of the boys—each so true, natural, and manly in their young way."

One of them, Norman Titterington, wrote to her the following Christmas :

"I hope you will be staying at Mertoun House next

August. I shall never forget what you said to me the day before we left the camp. I have trusted in the Lord Jesus since, and I have been a happier boy."

They did not meet again. When August came he was accidentally drowned, and the happiness begun the year before was completed for ever.

When Catherine Marsh had entered her eighty-first year, the secretaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society wrote to tell her that their Committee had unanimously resolved that she should be elected an honorary Life Governor of it. All her life she had greatly valued the Society. A little while before this she had said in a letter to Louisa Anstruther: "I do love with all my heart, that grand old *ship* that sails from Queen Victoria Street to every country in the world, with its Bibles and Testaments in every language."

At the request of the secretaries of the Bible Society, Lady Anstruther wrote a short sketch of her aunt's life, for their monthly report, which announced her new appointment. The closing sentence gave this exact description of her old age:

"Although advancing years compel her to forego the active work for her Master so dear to her heart, she is still, as ever, 'a succourer of many,' and responds with an energy and sympathy all her own to every call upon her. Troops of friends thank God that He still leaves His dear servant amongst us to bear witness to His love and faithfulness, and like a glowing torch to impart to all within her reach the flame of love and light."

The following letter will surely be read with deep interest because it gives so true a description of the beautiful character of Her Royal Highness the Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck, beloved from her childhood by the English nation.

From George Holland to C. M.:

"*George Yard Mission, Whitechapel, Oct. 29th, 1897.*—We are all in great sorrow just now. God in His goodness and love has taken to Himself the Duchess of Teck—

a real friend, so kind, so good, so gentle. She loved and served her Saviour, and now she is with Him, her work here is done. The blank made can never be filled up. My poor women to whom she has been so kind, (inviting many of them to spend a fortnight at Combe Warren, not far from the White Lodge,) are in tears, I felt I must weep too. One of my poor boys—without father—without home—only that I provide him with, asked ‘Why are you crying? she is happy in Heaven.’ The poor women talk of the warm garments she sent them, and of the kind words she spoke to them, for she interested herself in every case. Deeply do we sympathise with her much beloved Daughter, and her Brothers, and the Duke, may the Lord comfort them, only He can do it. She sleeps in Jesus Whom she loved and served so well. May God raise up others to take her place to cheer and comfort God’s poor servants, others to help, and sympathise with the poor.

“I am thankful to say I am still labouring on in the midst of the poorest of children, and poorest of people. I feel the Lord’s Presence every moment. ‘The Lord is at hand.’”

In November of this year one of her great-nephews, Gerard Wathen, thus described her in writing to his mother: “I was very proud of Marny, she was most majestic, and she makes you see and feel she lives for one thing only.”

Age never blunted her sympathy, nor chilled the warmth of her heart, nor hindered her in her championship of the wrong and oppressed.

In this same autumn the dreadful fate of the brave French soldier Captain Dreyfus, the victim of a conspiracy of false accusations, through which he had been degraded from his rank, dismissed from the Army, and sentenced to imprisonment in the Ile du Diable, was brought to light. The papers gave the account of the cruel sufferings, mental and bodily, which he had been enduring for five years, and Catherine Marsh so laid them to her heart that she prayed continually for his deliverance, and sent urgent appeals for prayer to be made for

him in many directions, including one to the Chief Rabbi in London, asking prayer to be made in all their synagogues, for Captain Dreyfus was a Jew.

A ray of hope came when M. Loubet, a lover of justice, was elected to the President's chair, and the Judges of the Court of Cassation, after the examination of witnesses and exposure of forgeries, ordered that a fresh court-martial should be held. This had been brought about by a series of events described by the Paris correspondent of *The Times*: "In this strange affair, at the moment of supreme crisis, an unforeseen event always intervenes to prevent iniquity. . . . There is evidently a Providence for saving truth, and protecting France."

C. M. to L. M. C. A.:

"It is a better world to live in, since the French Government have telegraphed to him as *Captain Dreyfus*."

The answer to prayer was beginning; and she telegraphed to Mme. Dreyfus: "Intense sympathy. God will yet deliver your husband." But the conspiracy was still strong, and assassinations were feared, so she sent forth an appeal for prayer that "God would protect blessed old M. Loubet, and Gallivet, that brave man, and Colonel Picquart, Dreyfus's self-sacrificing champion, and Captain Freystatter, and splendid Labori his advocate, and the beloved young Judges Merk and Beauvais."

There was a complete answer to all the prayers, in the acquittal of Captain Dreyfus, followed by his restoration to the French Army and later to the rank of Colonel.

She wrote her rejoicing to the President of the Republic, the Minister of War, to Colonel Picquart and others, sending to each a copy of the French edition of "the Memorials of a soldier who in the English Army fought side by side with the French in the Crimea."

Scarcely had this burden been lifted from her heart, than it was banished from her thoughts by the greatness of the strain of knowing England was again on the verge of war, and on October 11th the South African War began.

She had passed her eightieth birthday; her interest in the soldiers was as deep as ever, and the prompt energy

with which she turned her unceasing prayers for them into practical use, as in former days, was undiminished.

C. M. to L. M. C. A. :

“ My business now is to watch for the names of Colonels of Regiments going to the seat of war, in order to write to offer them Testaments, or Gospels, or books, and cards of ‘ The Soldier’s Prayer ’ for their men. Never once have these been refused, but accepted with warm gratitude, and parcels according to their choice have been sent. So I catch at every mention of a name of an Officer going out in a Command.”

In more than one instance a friendship by correspondence followed her request to these strangers, adding a fresh pleasure to her closing years. And this was specially the case in the letters she received from Sir Audley and Lady Neeld even till the last year of her life.

The Duchess of Abercorn to C. M. :

“ *January 1st, 1900.*—My very dear and kind old Friend,—How good of you to have once more remembered me. I had been thinking whether you could possibly recollect me once more, when the delightful little packet arrived. Thank you Dear a thousand times, I know how much I shall enjoy reading its contents. I came to London ten weeks ago intending to remain two nights, and since I have not been able to tear myself from my dear anxious sons and daughters. I have twelve grandsons in Africa, and three grand-nephews.—Believe me affectionately and gratefully yours, L. ABERCORN.”

She had many friends in the Army in South Africa; their letters kept her in touch with the soldiers, and again it was seen that War’s black cloud was illumined by the wondrous work the Holy Spirit wrought in many of those men who, fighting in a righteous cause, “ gloried in toil and set death at defiance.”

After hearing that at one of the camps on the hill-side by the Orange River, “ the voices of the soldiers may be heard at their nightly gatherings, going up in prayer, or in hymns of praise,” she wrote :

“ These are lights that star-like shine in the dark night

of war. Over and above all its ravages, the Holy Spirit turns loss into gain, and untimely death into Life Eternal."

Then, remembering the other side, she added, "Oh the heartaches and the broken hearts now! If we had not God, it would be unbearable; He will surely stand up for His poor oppressed white people, and His poorer cruelly used black people, and be on the side of those whom they can trust to be just and good to them. We do need comfort at this time—all we who care for our brave soldiers. Dear Granville Smith,¹ Colonel Harris, young Count Metaxa, Major Treeby, and many others. And all the young bridegrooms, and the loved husbands and sons. That Colonel Plumb was splendid, when he fell hopelessly wounded, calling out 'Forward my men—never mind me'—and he was found dead on their return. I believe God was with him. I do think He loves the generosity of the English character, and their high courage, and devotion to duty. Did you see the account of that jewel of an officer, who had ten wounds in one day, and he was heard to say with a chuckle, 'They never found out I was left-handed!' These young men are the wonders of the world. If I were an infidel I should have *now* to believe in a Saviour, and a Heaven."

To Lucy O'Rorke she wrote from Nine Oaks, Woking, Louisa Anstruther's home:

"Colonel Owen Hay has just been here, telling me of numbers of things I should like to tell you—but one I must tell you, for it cheered me. It was after I had said I could not have lived through this disastrous war, *but* for believing that God has housed a harvest of souls from those battle fields. 'Yes,' he replied strongly, 'I am sure of it. Men who might have gone on carelessly and sinfully to their death day, have in numbers been *roused*, by the knowledge that going forth in health and strength,

¹ Colonel Granville Smith, Coldstream Guards. He went through the whole of the South African War, and after the first battle he wrote to his wife from the battlefield of Belmont, telling her that he "had been kept in perfect peace, and had felt the Lord's presence about him as a coat of mail."

they may be killed in one moment, and they have turned to their Saviour, to pardon and save them.' ”

The title *Victory* for her little book for 1900 was chosen in faith, for when Lord Roberts was sent to take the command in South Africa, the fate of the expedition seemed trembling in the balance.

On November 28th, 1899, she wrote to Louisa Anstruther :

“ I am thinking very much, and praying very much about my little book *Victory*. Do pray for Divine teaching for me both in thoughts and words. I try to think I am writing a letter to each broken-hearted mourner for a dead hero, so as to let it come warm from the heart—and not be didactic! How delightful it was that our Queen remembered Lord Roberts’ birthday, and made him her Commander-in-Chief on that day.”

On New Year’s Day, 1900, she wrote :

“ Our great Field Marshal Lord Roberts, at the very moment of the falling of the heaviest blow which a father’s heart could receive, goes forth to give his splendid power and ripe experience to the service of his country, and Lord Kitchener, with the prestige of victory fresh upon him, comes willingly to join his chief. Soldiers of all ranks are urging their claim to be ordered out, and thousands of our gallant youths and manhood of all classes, have volunteered for the Front; never was there a time when we have been more tempted to be proud of our Army than now. Can we bear the whole flower of the manhood of our country, and of our generous Colonies to be thus imperilled, when the way to success is thrown wide open by God Himself, ‘ Call upon Me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.’ It is in the power of every man, woman, and child to help forward this grand result.”

When Lord Roberts was leaving England to take the command in South Africa, Catherine Marsh wrote to ask if he would take out a thousand copies of her little book *Victory*, for the soldiers in hospital, and others. He accepted the charge in the kindest and heartiest manner,

and wrote to her again on the way out to thank her, and to say that he was sure that the soldiers would be delighted with the *Victories*.

He wrote to her from Pretoria on July 23rd, 1900 :

"Dear Miss Marsh,—Thank you very much for your most kind letter of June 21st, and for the New Testament and Psalms which accompanied it, I value both greatly. The war still drags on, but with God's help I trust it will not be very long before it will come to an end. The climate is extraordinarily fine, for which I am thankful for the soldiers' sake. They have behaved quite splendidly. None better than those who have come from the Colonies. They are grand fellows.—With my kindest regards, believe me, yours very sincerely, ROBERTS."

The little book *Victory* was loved by many other people as well as by the soldiers. Alexina Haldane, a dear friend, wrote to tell Catherine Marsh of an old man dying in a workhouse to whom it was lent to read, but he could not bear to part with it, and died holding it tight in his hand, so it was buried with him. This was not the only instance in which the same thing happened.

While the war lasted Catherine Marsh continued from time to time to write in *The Record* fresh calls to prayer, above the signature "Credo," now well known to many, and always looked for by her friends when any tidings from the seat of war revealed some new cause for anxiety, until, with the victory granted to Lord Roberts, the call for prayer was exchanged for a call for thanksgiving.

On Sunday, June 24th, 1900, she wrote to Louisa Anstruther :

"How terrible is this suspense about Pekin, and Admiral Seymour and his little force. But He who gave Lady-smith and Mafeking to our prayers, is not tired of our beseechings, and He can give us the safety of Pekin, and the sailors, and missionaries. As to those blessed native Christians who have been massacred, it was short martyrdom, and then rest and peace, and martyrs' crowns quickly won."

Then on September 4th, 1900, she wrote again :

“What a resurrection is this safety of the Legation, and those with them in Pekin. It is a marvellous deliverance, and our souls do magnify the Lord for it.

“The same post brought me the notice of dear blessed George Holland’s death. A great deliverance for him, and what an abundant entrance he must have had into the Heavenly Kingdom, meeting thousands of happy ones whom he had led to Christ, longing to welcome him. But the world will be much the poorer without him, for such a believing praying spirit as his, is rare indeed, and he was a king over men too ! He had arranged everything for his work to go on, but it will be rather like a body without a soul, his beautiful keen spirit so possessed the whole machinery. For me it is the loss of a giant in faith and prayer; I had but to send him a line with a request for prayer, and he would take it into his heart and soul to plead with the Lord about it.”

There was another friend of the poor in whose good work she delighted, Dr. Barnardo, from whom she had this letter, which gave her great pleasure : “To know that you are in prayerful sympathy with me at a time of burden-bearing like the present is most comforting. Thank you for your welcome gift. I know the calls upon you are great. How your heart would rejoice if you saw the hundreds of boys and girls who are loving and serving Christ in our Homes to-day, and could read the letters which reach me, by almost every post, from young disciples of our Saviour whose hearts have been won to Him since they left the ‘Home.’”

In 1900 the autumn was spent at Appin in Argyllshire. The beauty of the scenery charmed her. She thus describes the view from her window : “There are three lochs of sea-water surrounding little islands of emerald green, in the distance the exquisite pale lilac Morven mountains, while the foreground is the gayest of gay little gardens.” While here she had an unexpected return to one of her great interests in the past. A railway was being made through Appin, and she gave a tea-party to the navvies, and was able to give them an address

afterwards. It made the occasion for a small union of Churches! Mr. Macgregor of the Established Church of Scotland, Mr. Ross of the Free Church, Mr. Pennock of the Scottish Episcopal, and Henry O'Rorke of the Church of England, each taking a part, lending her their willing help.

A year later Mr. Macgregor wrote :

"You will I am sure be glad to hear that the navvies are upon the whole behaving very well. A large number of them now attend worship every Sabbath. There is of course some drinking still, but much less than there has been. I hope your address to them, and your prayers for them, are now bearing fruit."

After her return from Scotland she went to stay with Colonel Granville and Lady Blanche Smith at Camberley. These beloved friends were in complete sympathy with her, and at their house she had the opportunity of meeting officers from the Staff College, and of speaking with them on the subject nearest to her heart. And not in vain. One of them to whom she had given a copy of the Memorials wrote to her :

"I have only had time to glance at it so far, but the little I have read has brought home to me what a weak coward I am, and has filled me with a desire to imitate a true Christian soldier." While another wrote : "It is coming across great hearts like yours that gives one hopeful courage in pursuing one's way amid the mazes of this strange and ever-changing world."

Since this was written Colonel Granville Smith's life came to its earthly close on March 4th, 1917. From his childhood to his latest hour he was one of the "sons of God without rebuke," who "shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life." It was truly said of him that to many he had been a gift from God to "strengthen their lives, to comfort their hearts, and to enrich their characters."

He had passed through two great sorrows, the loss of the eldest and youngest of his four sons. They were both in the same regiment with their father, and they were

ardent and steadfast young soldiers of Christ and of their King. The eldest, Keith, Catherine Marsh's godson, was killed at the end of October 1914, and Geoffrey, the youngest, was last seen gallantly leading his men in a desperate attack on September 29th, 1915.

After one of her long visits to Nine Oaks, Louisa Anstruther wrote to her :

“ *December 6th, 1900.*—The room still seems full of thee—and that sofa where for weeks past I have watched the dear face and form, ‘*diligent* in business, ‘*fervent* in spirit, serving the Lord,’ now lies empty and bare, though if I shut my eyes I seem to see you still there. Perhaps if I go and rest upon it by and bye, a *little* of the energy of your spirit may flow into mine !—anyway the air is full of your sweetness and love, and I have been sitting quiet for a while thinking of you, and of all your blessed words, and thanking God for our happy time together, and thanking you for *everything* you have been to me during the last sixty-five years, and for your constant untiring care for every soul under this roof while you were here.”

When the dark day for England came on January 22nd, 1901, in the death of our great and good Queen Victoria, and all hearts were united in one common grief, Catherine Marsh wrote to Louisa Anstruther :

“ Yesterday the shock of grief for our Queen's dying and death, made me quite ill—I felt unable to write even to you—but oh, how I thank God she was not spared to linger on with shattered powers,—and how we must bless Him for all that He made her to her country, and the world, and how we must pray for our Prince, whom one moment changed into our King.”

After the Queen's funeral, she wrote : “ What a flatness there is everywhere now, except when the discovery of some beautiful word or deed of our Queen, unknown to us before, shines out to relieve it. What a story it is for history ! *The Passing of Arthur* is as nothing in comparison, only three Queens were carrying him to his long (not last) home, and *she* had as her mourners crowned

heads, and the heirs to crowns, almost past counting. How kindly it was ordered that men of the Royal Navy should draw her lifeless form up the hill to Windsor Castle, nothing our dear sailors would have cared for more than to show by this last great effort their love to their Queen."

FELTWELL

PART II

SUNSET LIGHT, AND THE DARK HOUR BEFORE THE DAWN

1901-1912.

"Love is its own great loveliness alway,
And takes new lustre from the touch of time;
Its bough owns no December, and no May,
But bears its blossoms into Winter's clime."
THOMAS HOOD.

"Dark, dark hath been the midnight;
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land."

IN June, 1901, in answer to a request that she would send a message to be read at a Navy Mission Meeting at Beckenham, she wrote :

"Dear Friends, Inhabitants of Beckenham, some of you perhaps children, or grandchildren, of those whom I knew nearly half a century ago, the privilege is offered me of sending you a message by the lips of a dear and valued friend¹ of mine, and of the Navvies of Great Britain, successors of those who in former years met by hundreds on the Rectory lawn to listen to the Words of Life. Time would fail me to tell a hundredth part of the lovely memories that spring up in my mind and heart at the name of Beckenham Rectory—that home where 'prayer was wont to be made,' where Saints of God from all parts of the world met and held sweet converse with those so dear to my heart, who are now before the throne of God. May an echo from those voices out of the past speak to your hearts to-day, calling you to draw nigh to your Saviour Who is ever saying 'Come unto Me.' Draw

¹ The Rev. and Hon. Robert Grimston.

nearer to His Heart of love, hearken to Him in His Word—speak to Him of every hope and fear—of every snare and sin, and let no one stand between your soul and this close fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

In these closing years of Catherine Marsh's long life there are no events of great interest to record, but the small incidents that follow show there never was any change in her faith or her practice.

“It was my joy to see her in 1902,” wrote the Rev. Filmer Sullivan, who had first known her at the time of the Crimean War. “She is one of the sweetest old saints I ever saw, in all the beauty and holiness of an Indian summer.”

After her departure the following letter came from Mr. Henry Claughton¹ to Mrs. O'Rorke:

“*May 1st, 1914.*—I have always felt that it was a great privilege to meet Miss Marsh regularly once a year as I did from about 1881 to 1902. What always impressed me most about her character was her absolute sincerity, and her obvious sympathy and desire to help any who came across her path. Although her religion was such a source of joy to herself she was not content unless she could share it with others. I never met any one who, to my mind, walked more as if in the actual sight of God, than Miss Marsh.”

It is not surprising that she had many godchildren; among them were the first child of Henry and Lucy O'Rorke and the first child of Victor and Annie Buxton; and the last one was the first child of Harry and Christine O'Rorke, who was born in 1902, on July 20th, the birthday of her great-great-grandfather (Dr. Marsh), linking the festival of the past with the happiness of the present. She wrote the following letter, and put it into a Bible, for this little god-daughter:

“*Feltwell Rectory, Norfolk, March 5th, 1903.*—My very dear little Catherine Nancy, my precious little god-daughter and great-great-niece,—I am sending you a

¹ Henry Claughton, Esq., one of H.M. Inspectors of Schools.

Child's Bible with pictures in it, for your early childhood, and for your grown-up girlhood another Bible, which perhaps you will not see until by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I am seeing Him—'The King in His Beauty' and in His own Heaven. Dear, darling Child—do pray that every day you may, by faith, see Him more and more clearly—as your *own* Saviour—in all His Truth and Tenderness, and Glory and Beauty and Goodness, and every day believe more firmly in His love to you, and every day seek, by His own Holy Spirit's help, to serve Him better and to please Him more. 'Jesus, Master, *make* me all Thou wouldest have me to be' is a prayer which I have loved to pray since I was about 22, when I read it in a Swiss Protestant Pastor's saintly life. So I commend it to you darling little Nancy. God bless you with His *best* Blessings prays your loving Godmother."

In her younger days, when she was shopping, she used to give a little book and say a few helpful words to the one who served her, and often met with a pleasant response. Now, when her shopping was done by post, a little book was sent with the payment, and often some good words would be written also, and from some came answers like the following, from a tailor's shop in Regent Street: "Please accept our thanks for the book. It is very refreshing for business men to have such quiet thoughts given them and they are much appreciated."

From a corn and hay merchant: "It is such unspeakable comfort amidst the strife and turmoil of life, to meet with those whose only object is to raise one to higher and nobler aspirations. I have come across many who will thank God through all Eternity that they ever heard your name and read the precious books of which you are the author."

She still kept her prompt way of at once carrying into effect any helpful plan whenever it entered her thoughts. In October of 1904 she had listened to the account of a boy, only five years old, who, waking to find his bed on fire, jumped out, and got safely into the yard; then he

heard his little brother's cries, ran back into the burning room, and brought the burnt child out, but not without getting some burns himself. The children were alone in the house, both parents were at work. Scarcely was the story finished, before she had begun to dictate a letter to the brave little boy, and next a letter ordering a Scripture picture-book and child's story-book to be sent to him. And when Christmas came, among the numerous presents she gave, a toy stable with carts and horses was sent to the young brothers.

With the same ready spirit, as soon as she had heard read the account of the return of the Japanese Army at the close of their war with Russia, she immediately sent a sum of money to the Bible Society, asking that it should be spent by their agent in Japan in giving Testaments to the soldiers when they were welcomed home. It was an opportunity which might not occur again; and later she heard how gladly they were accepted.

A few extracts from her letters, some of them of an earlier date, give a little idea of the variety of books which she enjoyed hearing read aloud.

Louisa Anstruther had sent her *The Lancashire Life of Bishop Fraser*, and she wrote :

"For ten days I have been having such delightful intercourse with that enchanting Bishop. Thank you 10,000 times, my Darling, for sending it to cheer me in my weary sick bed. It has been, and is, a fund of delights to me, hearing his thoughts, and rejoicing in his character. Oh, *what* a man ! Why did he die ?"

At another time :

"Lucy has been reading to me the review of Arthur Balfour's evidently intensely interesting book. I thank God for such a man writing on the side of Belief in God. How delicately beautiful is the closing quotation from it in *The Spectator*. I am so thankful for it, and have sent for three copies to lend about. Thank you for copying that noble passage from Mr. Illingworth's Bampton Lecture. I hope it will clear many minds, and strengthen faith."

C. M. to L. M. C. A.:

"Ensconced in a heap of parcels, lay a precious treasure—Arthur Stanley's *Life*! Your grand gift, my Darling—how we shall enjoy having it read aloud in the evening, I am longing for to-night to have it begun."

She thoroughly appreciated Mrs. Ewing's perfect short stories. She wrote of them: "No wit more true and delicate than Mrs. Ewing's; no standard of an heroic soldier more beautiful than hers in *Jackanapes* and in *The Short Life*. They are charming to read aloud with young people."

These two, with *Melchior's Dream*, were her favourites amongst these books.

To L. M. C. A.:

"I am just hearing again that interesting book *The Sky Pilot*. I know I shall break my heart over the death of the pilot, but that can't be helped! It is a wonderfully well told story, and I think it must have had a foundation in fact; but I can hardly bear that he should die at the end of a year only of his blessed mission."

C. M. to Mrs. Dudley Ryder:

"*February 9th, 1903.*—How often when feasting on those delightful sermons of Bishop Phillips Brooks in *The More Abundant Life*, I think of the beloved giver and bless her for having provided such Sabbath comfort for me whenever I am hindered from getting to Church, where I have always such comfort from Henry's most interesting and helpful preaching."

In February, 1903, she lost another of her devoted friends, Louisa Lady Ashburton, first known in the Leamington days: "She and I have loved each other for fifty-seven years" was what Catherine Marsh said, when she heard she was gone, "but for herself it is untold mercy; she is taken from her suffering and desolated life to be for ever with the Saviour Whom she loved and served with all the warmth of her great and strong heart, and she has rejoined her idolized daughter."

Still it added to the feeling of being *left behind*, which

could not but cross her mind when the friends of her girlhood reached the Heavenly Home before her. For a great many years she had often stayed with this friend, who some little while before had written to her "You know how tenderly I love you, and revere you, and thank God for you;" and with this feeling in her heart she was always desiring Catherine Marsh's society at Kent House in London or at Loch Luichart, her lovely home in the Highlands, and whenever she was her guest, she always gave her ample opportunities for the good work on which her heart was set. Lady Ashburton's only child,¹ beautiful and talented like her mother, and sharing in all her artistic and benevolent interests, shared also with her mother in devotion to Catherine Marsh. After Miss Baring's marriage her husband soon began to share in his wife's trust in, and love for her life-long friend, and during Lady Northampton's long and weary illness, they both found in her company when she could be with them, and in her letters at other times, an unfailing source of help and cheering. Lady Ashburton did not long survive the loss of her daughter.

Some little time before this Catherine Marsh had written : "The desire to depart grows stronger as time advances, and friend after friend goes in before me, to taste the wondrous bliss of Heaven. But it is worth while living on, if the Holy Spirit will vouchsafe to use the closing years, or months, or days, for winning any soul to come and see the beauty, the glory, and the goodness of our Saviour and King Eternal."

The shadows of evening were lengthening, and she was feeling the burden of her many years. Yet, when she was within two months of her ninetieth birthday, her energy carried her through the long journey to Keswick, enabled her to enjoy its deep spiritual interests, and once more to address the undergraduates. It was also sufficient to take her, on her return, for a last visit to Louisa Anstruther, and when she came home, the evening of her return was spent in

¹ The Hon. Mary Florence Baring, afterwards the wife of the fifth Marquis of Northampton.

the drawing-room as usual until after family prayers, which she loved. Then she walked across the hall between two of her tall great-nieces, the third following to give help on the staircase. It was an easy one for her, with broad shallow steps, and half way up a seat was arranged, and while she rested on it she would talk and laugh with her loved helpers.

But on this night she felt the difficulty of getting upstairs had become so great that she would not risk it again, and as she would not allow herself to be carried, she came downstairs no more. This did not mean she intended to live only an invalid life, far from it. Some little time before, when recovering from a bronchial attack, she had written : " I am so glad to be back in my boudoir, I hate bed except at its proper time," and this was her feeling still.

There was no loneliness in her upstairs life. She had many visits throughout the day from Henry O'Rorke, his wife was her constant companion, and their daughters were always in readiness to be her secretary or reader, or to carry out any of her wishes. She still possessed the clear powers of her mind, and her retentive memory, and was taking great interest in all that was going on in the world, and liking to have daily readings from *The Times* about public events, and from various books. But the Bible was her greatest delight. The Gospels were read through three times in the year, three Psalms the first thing in the morning, and a chapter in the Old Testament; then the second lessons for the Morning and Evening Services were read at different times in the day. She was ever " instant in prayer," and she often refreshed her own spirit and those around her by repeating in her still beautiful voice, some of the many hymns with which her memory was stored, and sometimes she would repeat long poems which she had learned in her girlhood. Louisa Anstruther came to stay at Feltwell Rectory three or four times in each year. George Marshall and his wife, who were living at San Remo, came also; Victor and Annie Buxton and their children were frequent visitors; Harry and Christine, and Ashley and Isabel O'Rorke came whenever they could, and so did

others of her relations, and she was glad at heart to see them each and all.

Many friends old and new came also, who felt what a privilege it was to see her in her lovely old age, with her silver hair, delicate complexion, smooth white forehead, sparkling eyes which had no look of blindness in them, and the radiant smile which lighted up her face. To look upon her was to realize the truth of one of her favourite quotations, "They never grow old who have ever been anything better than young." When conversation turned on the subject of the promised second coming of the Lord, her countenance shone with heavenly joy, and she would lift up her hands and clasp them together, as if in entreaty for His speedy return.

In the early autumn of 1910 among her visitors was her old friend the Bishop of Durham, with his wife and daughter (her godchild) and her husband. The Bishop wrote of their visit, in a letter to *The Spectator* :

"I had the sacred privilege of sitting and kneeling beside her sofa in her quiet upper room, hung all around with the portraits of three generations of friends, men and women many of them who have 'owed their own souls' to her. Sightless now, but having every faculty instinct with undying life, she lay there, still and beautiful, with her now just ninety-two years upon her. And she so spoke that in no figure of speech we felt that through her 'the invisible world with us had sympathised. Christ looked and spoke through His servant, almost unveiled.'"

By sending her little annual book she kept in touch with many more friends than she could keep up correspondence with, and the hearty answers to her New Year's greeting gave her a bright glow of pleasure in the dark days of winter. Every post in the early days of January brought crowds of letters for her—on the first day of 1906 she wrote of "50 letters yesterday, 81 this morning."

A few of these letters follow next and show the enduring nature of her friendships, for the first dates back to the days of her childhood, the second to her girlhood, the

third to Leamington, the fourth to Beckenham, and the fifth to Brighton.

From the Hon. Harry Bourke :

“ My dear old Friend, friend of my father, mother, sister, and brothers long and long ago,—Your letter and charming New Year’s greeting I value and cherish so much. May God enable me to profit by your glorious example, and enable me to meet my end as you are bound to, when *the* moment arrives.—Your truly devoted old friend, HARRY BOURKE.”

From the Earl of Cranbrook, 1908 :

“ Your constant remembrance of me I value much, your prayer for me and mine will be a reminder to offer a like one for you and yours, and I trust you may yet work long for good. Old friendships diminish in number but keep a place in the heart of yours very sincerely, CRANBROOK.”

From Lady Wynford :

“ How I thank you for your loving remembrance and thank God still more for giving me the precious friendship of one who for so many, many years has never forgotten me. I do prize your unfailing affection more than I can express in words. The little book and the prayers are most beautiful and comforting. What I would give to see your face once more, but I look forward to the Meeting Place above where ‘the parting word shall pass our lips no more.’ Nothing can ever lessen the love I feel for you always and ever.—Your affectionate C. E. M. WYNFORD.”

From Miss Eleanor Holland :

“ I have just read through your touching little book, dear kind friend of so many years, and I felt carried back to ancient history as I read of the Addiscombe Cadets, and recalled so vividly the look of them on a Sunday—*youth* all over now, and *life* for most of them. And you, dear faithful witness for the Lord you so truly loved and tried to make others love, you still linger on this side the veil to speak to us words of faith and experience full of bright hope and encouragement. God bless you for them, and fold you closely in His Arms till you too are gathered within Heaven’s capacious breast to meet the many you

have helped through the difficult pilgrimage.—Yours with grateful love, ELEANOR HOLLAND.”

From Miss E. Macnaghten :

“ So many thanks for sending me *The Crowning Day*. It is of very special interest to us—remembering so well those old days when *The Prince and the Prayer* came out. It seems like another lifetime, but though all outward things are so changed, one loves to know that friendship remains the same, and is a type of our Lord’s unchanging love. Yours very affectionately,—LILY MACNAGHTEN.”

The next letter delighted her :

“ I received your little *Beyond* and am thankful for a letter from such a dear old friend that helped me when I was not old enough to help myself. I have not forgotten what I learnt in the dear old orphanage home at Beckenham. My brother Henry is in Sydney now, and doing well, I will write and let him know you kindly asked after him.—I remain yours respectfully, EDWIN WILSON, one of your old orphans.”

Her Heavenly Father often sent, in her old age, tokens of His approval of her faithfulness in carrying out the work to which He had called her. When they came she thanked Him fervently, but each one seemed only to deepen her humility of spirit. Yet to have helped to send into the world’s harvest field such devoted labourers as those whose letters follow, could not but make her heart rejoice.

From Miss Agnes Weston :

“ *Royal Sailors’ Rest, Portsmouth, March, 1908*.—Your work and your book *English Hearts and English Hands* first stirred in my heart, when a school-girl, the desire to give my life to Christ and His work, so that I shall be able to thank you by and bye, when we meet in His Presence, better than I can now.—Yours most affectionately, AGNES WESTON.”

From Miss Sandes :¹

“ *Soldiers’ Home*.—My honoured, loved Friend,—I do so look forward to gathering with many more of your

¹ *Enlisted—or My Story* tells of what she has been enabled to do for soldiers.

Daughters whom our Lord has used you to lead into service for Him, and then with a great circle of our dear soldiers and sailors, and all kinds of men and women led directly or indirectly through you to Him, all gathered round you to praise Him with you, and to give Him all the glory. In my girlhood my whole life then, (and it has been ever since,) was brought under the influence of *English Hearts and Hands*. That book encouraged me to attempt my lifework for soldiers, so what help our dear men have received in my fifteen *Soldiers' Homes*, they owe it, under God, indirectly to you."

From Louisa Anstruther :

"I have just had a very pleasant visit from Mary Sumner;¹ she told me how she would love to meet you, for you had been 'one of the inspiring forces in her life,' inducing her by your books to begin a large class for men when she was quite young;" while in another letter she told of her friend, Mrs. Fitzgerald Dalton, a greatly valued speaker in the Mothers' Union, having said to her, that it was reading *English Hearts and Hands* when she was a girl, which had "started her in anything good that she had ever done."

Through all her life Catherine Marsh delighted in giving, but she also kept, even in her old age, a child-like freshness of heart with which she thoroughly enjoyed the arrival of the gifts of love, as they often came to her from relations and friends.

Among the pleasures given her was the thoughtful kindness of our gracious Queen Mary, who for many years sent her as tokens of her remembrance photographs either of herself or of her royal children, (one year of the beloved Duchess of Teck,) for each succeeding Christmas Day, always with a kind message written by her own hand.

In 1904 Catherine Marsh had a special edition, 3,000, of the *Memorials of Captain Vicars* printed at her own cost,

¹ Mrs. Sumner, founder of the Mothers' Union, wife of the Bishop of Guildford.

that she might send them as her gift to different Soldiers' Homes, for distribution.

In November, 1908, she thought that she would not be able to write her little annual book; but one morning she awoke saying "A motto for my little book has been given to me by my Lord in the night—the verse :

‘ Our King cometh down,
O'er His people to reign,
And His presence shall bless them
With Eden again.’

I shall be able to write it, and it shall be called *The King is Coming*."

At the close of this year her thoughts were often occupied with the coming General Election. Amongst other Unionist candidates for whose success she hoped, was Colonel Myles Sandys, whom she had known from his boyhood, when he and her nephew Charles Marshall¹ were school-fellows. Colonel Sandys had represented the Bootle Division of Lancashire, with its nearly 24,000 voters, for twenty-five years. He was in the midst of his electoral campaign when her letter reached him, with the little annual *Beyond*, and he wrote :

"Your valued letter with your good words to which I look forward, and feel the New Year incomplete without them, are this year, if possible, more welcome than ever. If I am elected it will be my seventh Parliament—a hotly contested election like this is a trying matter. But there is the *Beyond*, and our grand Hope sure and stedfast, to sustain us."

Though the country gave the verdict for the Radical government, Bootle was faithful to the Unionists; and after the counting of votes, Colonel Sandys, at 11.30 p.m. on January 21st, enclosed a card to Catherine Marsh with the good news: "The Lord be praised, I am victorious again. Majority 1,085, the last time only 340."

The next letter recalls her interest amongst the Naval Cadets on the training ship H.M.S. *Britannia*. It is

¹ Colonel Charles Henry Tilson Marshall, Bengal Staff Corps.

from Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, now the Lord Beresford.

"September 10th, 1910.—My very dear and affectionate old Friend,—How kind and like yourself to have written me so charming a letter. How good of you to remember me still, all these long years since I was a little boy. I have always remembered that day, and your generous kindness and interest in me, and have never forgotten your words of advice, to run straight and do my level best for my country, to help those in distress to the best of my ability, to fear God, and to honour the King. God bless you. I shall try to carry out your advice to the end. I was lucky to have met you when I was a little Naval Cadet, so many years ago, when I made so loyal, firm and affectionate a friend as you are."

Among the many letters for her ninety-second birthday, were the two that follow next; the first was signed Charles McClure :

"Perhaps you will not remember me, but I sometimes think of you, and the time when as a boy I attended the services in the Barn at Beckenham, lent by my father, and I shall never forget those services. I write to send my sincere congratulations on your 92nd birthday, and I pray you may know more than ever of the wonderful love of Christ."

The next letter was signed W. Carlton McKibbin :

"September 12th, 1910.—Dear Madam,—I was greatly gratified to find by a letter signed 'Onlooker' in *The Spectator* of August 27th that you were reported alive and well at 92 years of age. In July 1880 you read in the papers of the successful effort made by a boy to save a little girl from drowning, and honoured that boy by a gracious token of your interest, the gift of a book of your own writing. That book I still have, and am delighted to think the Authoress is still amongst us. With deepest respect I ask you to add my name to your numerous well wishers on your approaching birthday."

In her annual for 1911, *The Horizon*, she wrote the following passages :

“ ‘Safe in His holding I fear not
 To launch on an unknown sea,
 The King of all Heaven is with me,
 The God of Eternity.’

This verse, written many years ago, is coming into experience now that I am nearing the heavenly horizon, and almost in sight of the narrow sea—

‘Where one by one the best beloved
 Pass over, Lord, to Thee.’

It may be that even before these words are printed I shall have heard the thrice-welcome call, ‘Come up higher.’ The sense of utter unworthiness to hear that call deepens indeed, but the expectation that it will sound, not for my sake, but for His sake Who redeemed me with His precious Blood, is a certainty upon which my soul rests.

“In the short interval that may be left to me it is my longing desire to ‘Speak the honour of His Name,’ Who all my long life has kept me, and will never let me go, and also to be a witness that I have found it all true which the promises of God have told us. Not one good thing hath failed, nor could fail, for ‘He is faithful that promised.’

“But a more glorious prospect than passing through death’s portal is constantly put before us in the New Testament, ‘The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh;’ and even I may live to see that Day of days; for any day, any hour, ‘The Lord Himself may descend from Heaven,’ and we may be ‘caught up to meet Him in the air.’

“Yes, together; for we, with the risen dead in Christ, shall be caught up in the clouds, never to be parted again.”

Sometimes her little books reached those who were far away in lonely places. Of *The Horizon*, Adeline Duchess of Bedford wrote :

“Last year her New Year’s book fulfilled its Mission among a little gathering of wandering men in wide Australia, for on a broiling Sunday in February they seized the little book so eagerly, poor fellows, and I gave them her cards of prayer also.”

In her ninety-third year she made one more effort on behalf of her Navvy friends, by writing a letter to *The Record*, telling of what was urgently required to be done for the spiritual needs of the men who were making the great Canadian Railway, and her appeal met with a good response.

On September 15th, 1911, Lady Erroll wrote to her : " On this day many, many years ago, you were with us at Slains, and we had the great joy of keeping your birthday—an occasion dear to us all, and few of us will ever forget it. We will cherish it while life lasts, for we honour you and love you most tenderly, and look forward to the meeting in our *Saviour's Home*."

Notwithstanding that for some years he had been suffering from a fatal disease of the heart, Henry O'Rorke was still carrying on the work of his parish until July, 1911. From that time, through weary days, and still wearier nights of breathlessness, sleeplessness, and pain, no word of complaint escaped his lips, no look of impatience was ever seen on his calm face. He often sat with Catherine Marsh in her boudoir, and they had much of heavenly converse together. Now they both were almost within sight of the City—

" By day a polished pearl it shines,
By night it glitters like a star"—

and each might wonder which would be the first to enter its glowing portals. Yet "that blessed Hope," the Second Coming of the Lord, still occupied their thoughts, for they were of "them that love His Appearing;" so they watched for it as He has bidden, "at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing or in the morning."

But with them there was no dread of crossing the River of Death, for they knew—

" that the Guide would come,
In the rippling waters a Footstep near,
A grasping Hand, and a Voice 'I am here.' "

Thus the time went by until December 22nd. Christmas being then so near, Catherine Marsh's thoughts were full

of the many interests and occupations which it brings. At all times she took great pleasure in giving gifts, but at this season the parcels to be sent out were so numerous, that sometimes she would say with a smile, "I almost hope I shall not live to see another Christmas."

She was also thinking and praying much about her little annual, *The Time is at Hand*, and the card of prayer, and she had already begun to send them to her friends. That afternoon the Rev. Harold Young brought a clerical friend of his who had just come from Australia. She welcomed them heartily, and spoke to them with earnestness and animation of heavenly things, and of Him Whom her soul loved. In the course of conversation she repeated without one hesitation, J. Edmeston's fine poem on "A real occurrence in a circle of friends."¹

The same evening, when Henry O'Rorke and his wife were with her in her boudoir as usual, she repeated to them four of her favourite hymns. The last she said is one that is little known :

"Voice of a pitying Saviour,
Speak comfort to my heart,
That every hurtful feeling
May hear Thee, and depart;

As when the west wind whispers o'er
The bosom of the deep,
The giant billow crouches down
And storms and tempests sleep.

O ! then how passing peaceful
The smiling surface seems ;
How sleeps the weary mariner,
And of his haven dreams.

I would that I could welcome
My Lord with offerings meet ;
And hang His sacred temple
With fragrant garlands sweet ;

But oh, this heart no Eden is,
Where flowers of goodness grow,
It is a parchèd wilderness
Trode down by sin and woe.

¹ See Appendix.

But Thou canst raise, Redeemer,
E'en in the waste a shrine,
And Thou canst Thine own welcome make,
E'en in this heart of mine.

They tell me there are pleasures
'Midst scenes of human strife,
And would I die so wholly
To all the joys of life?

Oh yes, I would be dead to all
That Jesus bids me flee,
He would not rob me of true bliss,
He died to set me free.

They tell me there are sorrows
For Christians—be it so;
My sins have been too many,
Too few the tears that flow.

Some grief for Christ I fain would bear
That I might love Him more,
And know by fellow-suffering
The nameless pangs He bore.

Is it the Lamb Who lightens
The blest abodes above?
Then Heaven itself will brighter be,
The more I know His love.

O! had I not that story
No human pen could write,
Till by the Eternal Spirit
'Twas dipped in living light.

Not fancy's wildest dreams could paint
Such love, so full, so free,
Such unimaginable grace,
That Christ should die for me.

I feel like one who gazes
On ocean wide and fair,
In wonder lost I can but cry,
'O! launch me quickly there.'"

Then, helped by her great-nieces, she walked across to her bedroom, and when she was seated in her armchair beside the fire, the others followed to bid her a fond good-night; and they left her with her attached maid, without a thought that never again would they hear her up-lifting words; without a fear of the dread moment which the next day would bring.

She slept fairly well, and at about eight o'clock in the morning when she was sitting up in bed, she quietly laid her head back on her pillow. Her maid asked if she felt ill, but there was no response—a stroke had made her helpless, and speechless.

At first there was hope that her power of speech would return when the unconsciousness, which lasted about thirty-six hours, had passed off. A vain hope; never again were heard the words of love she bestowed so lavishly, nor the words of heavenly teaching so often spoken by those dear lips.

It was thought that at her great age it was not likely that she could live more than a few days. But when the trial of her faith, and the faith of those who loved her, was lengthened from days to weeks, and from weeks to months, the only comfort was *the certainty* that she was far dearer to the Heart of her Saviour, than she could be even to those on earth who loved her best. This forbade any questioning. Then patience had her perfect work, and doubtless “the light affliction, and but for a moment,” heavy and long though it seemed while it lasted, worked for her “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

At first she made vain efforts to speak, and was able to listen to a text of Scripture, or a short hymn, and after hearing the grand familiar verse :

“ All hail the power of Jesu's Name,
Let Angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of All ”—

she endeavoured to say “ Crown Him.”

Early in her illness there was a day when she seemed to be seeing the invisible, for she waved her left hand, of which she had retained the use, smiled brightly, and bowed her head while it rested on the pillow, as if she were receiving guests with loving welcomes, and in the long sleep that followed this, she looked very happy. About the same time her maid, Frances Manington, heard her say with a great effort three or four times, a sound that was like the

word "Come," she asked "Is it me you want?" But in reply she gently shook her head. Then, in answer to "Is it the Lord Jesus?" she smiled and nodded, looking upwards with her sightless eyes.

The shock of that sudden sorrow told heavily on Henry O'Rorke, but he lived on for three months. Towards the end, all his children, and the eldest and second of his grandsons, Fowell and Roden Buxton, were with him, to his great pleasure and comfort. Then, at 8'clock in the morning of April 1st, 1912, while his wife and children knelt round his bed, his eldest son read the commendatory prayer for the dying, the collect for Easter Even, and the Lord's Prayer, in which they all joined. As the Amen was said, there was a gentle sigh, the brave and patient heart had failed, and the best Beloved had passed on—he had gone without knowing the pain of parting.

A ray of sunlight streamed in through the half-closed curtain and shone across his bed. He was looking beautiful, his dark eye-brows and eye-lashes giving him almost the appearance of youth. He had left no farewell words of love, but they were not needed, for his life had been a constant overflow of love, a possession for those who loved him, as long as memory lasts. He had lived a life like "the light of dawn, shining more and more to the perfect day."

On the Thursday before Good Friday he was buried in the churchyard of Upshire, amidst the daffodils and other spring flowers he dearly loved; all with their silent voices telling of the Resurrection Hope.

And she to whom he was so dear knew not of his departure. For several weeks he had been unable to go upstairs, so she could not miss him, and it seemed cruel to tell her, not knowing what effect it might have, as she could not express her feelings.

The new Rector¹ was appointed, and the right to the Rectory became his on June 1st, but when he knew the

¹ The Rev. Colin A. F. Campbell, Archdeacon of Wisbech. He died early in January 1916, when scarcely past his prime, greatly regretted.

circumstances, he showed the greatest kindness and consideration, and said that on no account must the risk be run of moving her, even in an ambulance, and that he hoped she would stay in her old home as long as her life lasted; and that he would lodge in the village.

Her strength failed so gradually that the change was almost imperceptible. Through all that sad year she retained her consciousness, except during the day and a half after the stroke fell upon her. She just knew her loved ones when they spoke close to her ear, she was almost deaf, and she took no notice at other times. As far as could be told she was unaware of the passing of time, for night and day being the same to her, there was nothing to mark its flight.

What those eleven months and a fortnight must have been to her prompt spirit that never could brook the least delay in carrying out her plans, which were always for the good of others, those who loved her most hardly dared to think.¹

For some weeks before her release, she slept for the greater part of each twenty-four hours—little sleeps of about two hours at a time, very peaceful, with gentle breathings like a child's, followed by brief waking intervals.

Then came the short attack of bronchitis, which was to bring her to the Home where her heart had gone long before. Harry O'Rorke, her godson, had come to stay for a night, and in the morning, just before he had to leave, he held her hand, and repeated in his clear voice, "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty," and she returned his loving clasp.

¹ Just two years after Catherine Marsh's death, a stranger wrote the following letter: "Many years ago a friend of mine met Miss Marsh at a time when a well-known lady had just died, after having suddenly lost her power of speech, and her death came without her recovering it. Some who were present naturally said they felt the sadness of this, but Miss Marsh said it did not strike her as sad; she did not feel that she would dread it for herself, but would rather feel that in such a case there would be nothing to come between her communings with her Saviour." And so it may have been that when shut out from all that was going on around, she was enabled to have those comforting communings of which she had spoken in the past.

Louisa Anstruther, whose health had become very delicate, was quite unable to come to be with her, a great trial for her devoted heart.¹ To her Lucy O'Rourke wrote :

" *December 12th, 1912.—12.50 p.m.* She has just passed away from us, our wonderful Mother-Auntie, no one was ever quite like her, nor ever will be. Now all the longings of her eager heart are satisfied, she has seen her Saviour face to face and—

‘Never will she feel again
Anguish for another’s pain.’

Oh, what joy there is on the shining shore with the welcoming throng, and the blissful surprise for her that darling Henry is there, to welcome her with his lovely smile.

"There was no apparent change yesterday, but between 2 and 3 o'clock last night the first slight sign of the change came, and in the morning her breathing became difficult. At 12.30 she turned her face to the soft pillow as if she would fall asleep. Manington who has nursed her with such skill and unwearied love, was beside her and said, 'She is going.' Lulu, Gwendolen, Modwyn, and I were kneeling by her bed and commended her lovely departing spirit into the Divine Hands, the pierced redeeming Hands, surely stretched out to receive His long loved one. So gently was she passing away that once Manington said sadly, 'She is gone,' and then another faintly flickering breath showed she was still with us; but at half-past twelve she passed on, we were left behind, and her lifelong pilgrimage was done.

‘The bells a joyous chime begin,
And lo! the Shining Ones come out,
To lead the weary pilgrim in.’”

"So the day drew on that Christiana must be gone. Behold, all the banks beyond the river were full of horses and chariots which were come down from above to accompany her to the city gate.

"So she went and called, and entered in at the gate, with all the ceremonies of joy.

"At her departure the children wept, but Mr. Great-Heart and Mr. Valiant-for-Truth played upon the well-tuned cymbal and harp for joy."

¹ When the tidings reached her she said, "I cannot live without her," and on January 26th, 1913, she rejoined her.

FAREWELL

DECEMBER 17TH, 1912

"The pilgrim they laid in a large upper chamber, whose window opened toward the sun-rising. The name of the chamber was Peace, where he slept till break of day."—*Pilgrim's Progress*.

"Translate the grave into a gentler word,
Call it the chamber Peace."

WILLIAM ALEXANDER, Archbishop of Armagh.

A MEMORIAL SERVICE for Catherine Marsh was held at noonday in St. James's, Piccadilly. The officiating Clergy were Bishop Ryle (Dean of Westminster), the Dean of Canterbury, the Rev. Prebendary Webb-Peploe, the Rev. and Hon. Robert Grimston, and the Rev. Harry O'Rorke.

There was a large congregation of those who loved her, and thanked God for her, who came to show their last tribute of love, and they sang the words dear to her from childhood :

"There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain."

At the close of the service Harry O'Rorke read this letter, from the Archbishop of Canterbury :

"*Old Palace, Canterbury, December 13th.*—Dear O'Rorke, —Not till your letter came to me to-night had I seen a notice of the call Home—to higher and wider work-fields than those of earth, of the veteran pioneer of women's evangelistic forces in the England of to-day. God has called her at Christmas-tide, the season that she loved, when we all awaited letters or booklets from her year after year. My earliest recollections are associated with *English Hearts and English Hands*, and for about half a century I have been

more or less in touch with her though at a distance. She is the last of the band of notable 'Catherines' who used to be grouped together forty years ago. Such a life, when its even-tide comes, requires *Te Deum*, not *Miserere*.

"I wish I could have been in London on Tuesday. It is not in my power. I have great long-standing engagements here, and could not now, in a busy Ember week, upset them without causing gravest inconvenience to many.—I am yours most truly, RANDALL CANTUAR."

The funeral took place in the afternoon, at the little church of Upshire, built by Sir T. Fowell Buxton. It stands on a slight hill overlooking a view of far distances, and in a flowery churchyard. Here numbers of her relations, and a great company of friends and strangers, had assembled, and the hymn—

"Come, let us join our friends above,
Who have obtained the prize,
And on the eagle wings of love
To joys celestial rise"

was sung as they entered the Church. Then when the Lesson was ended, while the *Nunc Dimittis* was softly sung, the mourners passed out into the churchyard, and to the open grave, lined with ivy and flowers, side by side with Henry O'Rorke's. "There was sorrow on every face as they watched the coffin, containing all that was mortal of one so dearly loved, being slowly lowered into the grave, and heard the moving words: 'Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.' But it was the sorrow that is illuminated by the Resurrection Hope.

"Some stepped forward to take a last look, and dropped flowers into the grave, and then all was over, and as they left the grave-side, the red sun was setting in the west; steadily and slowly it disappeared amongst the clouds—a splendid spectacle, and a symbol not less beautiful."¹

As the crowd was dispersing an aged man said to one who was near him: "I never set eyes on Miss Marsh in my lifetime; but I have been a schoolmaster, and no book

¹ From *The Record*, of December 20th, 1912.

ever came into my school which had such an influence on the boys as *Captain Hedley Vicars*. So when I saw in *The Times* the death of Miss Marsh, I felt it my duty to come and attend at her grave, and pay my last mark of respect to her memory."

The letters of love, and of lamentation for her, and of rejoicing in her joy, would fill a small volume; what those who knew her felt concerning her, was truly summed up by the Bishop of Durham :

" Her holy memory will glow continually, for us who loved her, into a presence. It is a great gift to have known such a Christian woman, and to have seen Christ so magnified in her. She was good with a goodness wonderfully blent of pure natural affections and of the life of the indwelling Spirit. And there was a greatness always in the goodness, a largeness of heart, a strong and wide-embracing sympathy and fellowship, a power as of one who might have done notable things in other fields, if God had not concentrated her whole thought and will upon the unsearchable riches of Christ."

" Christ ! I am Christ's ! and let the name suffice you,
Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed."

This may be counted as her message to each one who reads her *Life*.

APPENDIX

A REAL OCCURRENCE IN A CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

"WHICH is the happiest death to die?"

"Oh," said one, "if I might choose,
Long at the Gates of bliss I would lie,
And feast my spirit ere I fly,
With bright celestial views.
Mine were a lingering death without pain,
A death which all might love to see,
And mark how bright and sweet would be
The victory I should gain!
Fain would I catch a hymn of love
From the Angels' harps that ring above;
And sing it with my parting breath
Quivered and expired in death—
So that those on earth might hear
The harp notes of another sphere;
And gather from the death they view,
A gleam of hope to light them through,
When they should be departing too."

"No," said another, "not so I;
Sudden as thought is the death I would die;
I would suddenly lay my shackles by,
Nor bear a single pang at parting,
Nor see the tears of sorrow starting,
Nor hear the quivering lips that bless me,
Nor feel the hands of love that press me,
So, would I die;
All joy, without a pain to shroud it!
All bliss, without a fear to cloud it!
Not slain, but caught up as it were
To meet my Saviour in the air!
Oh, how bright were the realms of light,
Bursting at once upon the sight!"

His voice grew faint, and fixed was his eye,
As if gazing on visions of ecstasy;
The hue of his cheek and lip decayed,
But around his mouth a bright smile played.

They looked,—he was dead,—his spirit had fled,
 Painless and swift as his own desire !
 The soul undressed from the mortal vest,
 Stepped in the car of heavenly fire,
 And proved how bright
 Were the realms of light,
 Bursting at once upon the sight.

J. EDMESTON.

This poem is quoted at the request of friends. It is as Catherine Marsh repeated it, but there are a few small omissions from the original, which is in a little book called *Sacred Poetry*, published many years ago.

LIST OF CATHERINE MARSH'S WRITINGS

- | | |
|---|---|
| The Victory Won | The First Earl Cairns |
| Memorials of Captain Vicars,
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| English Hearts and English
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| Brave, Kind, and Happy | (Thoughts for the Fast Day,
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| The Haven and the Home | England's Sins and India's
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| Midnight Chimes | Still Upward |
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| The Life of Major Arthur
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| The Life of the Rev. Wm.
Marsh, D.D. | A Way for the Ransomed to
Pass Over |
| Dream-light from Heaven | Towards the Sun-rising |
| From Dark to Dawn | On the March |
| The Prince and the Prayer | Victory |
| The Prince and the Praise | Peace after Victory |
| The Rift in the Cloud | Together |
| The Golden Chain | Welcome Home |
| Day Dawn | The Crowning Day |
| The Peerless Princess | From Memory to Hope |
| Crossing the River | The Morning Glory |
| Shining Light | At the Doors |
| Heroes of the Mine | The Vision |
| Memory's Pictures | The King is Coming |
| Short Sketch of Sir Arthur
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